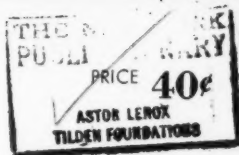


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AUGUST, 1961

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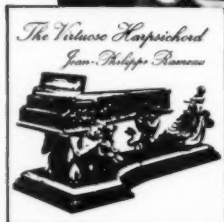
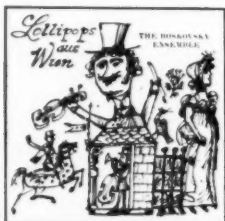


*Francis Poulenc*



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# The American Record Guide

Incorporating  THE AMERICAN TAPE GUIDE

for AUGUST, 1961

Volume 27, Number 12

Contents Indexed in Readers' Guide to  
Periodical Literature and Music Index

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THE AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE, formerly *The American Music Lover*, is an independent journal of opinion. It is published on or before the tenth of the dated month. Price 40¢ a copy.  
●Subscription rates: U. S. A. and Canada, one year, \$4.50. Pan-America, \$4.75. Elsewhere \$5.00.  
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●Mail Address: Post Office Box 319,  
Radio City Station, New York 19, N. Y.

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ON THE COVER: Francis Poulenc, whose "Gloria" is reviewed on page 952 (Fred Plaut photo)

An adventure in reminiscence . . .

# What Victor Did For Me

By DALE WARREN

"YES, BY GADSKI", we youngsters used to exclaim with devilish nonchalance back in the early teens. This did not mean that we were being profane. Nor did it mean that we had yet heard Johanna Gadski, bright star of the German wing of the Metropolitan, before her volubly expressed sympathies caused her banishment as World War I brought many sympathies into sharp focus. It did mean, however, that there was a Victor Talking Machine, complete with ugly horn, annoying winding apparatus, and canine replica listening to "His Master's Voice", on prominent display in the front parlor. It also meant that at least to teen-age ears Gadski's *Ho, yo, to, ho!* from "*Die Walküre*" was one of the most dramatic records ever to start on its triumphant way from Camden, New Jersey.

Other discs—although the word was record—that served to break down the young resistance were John McCormack's *Comin' Through the Rye*, Harry Lauder's *Breakfast in Bed on Sunday Morning*, various airs from "*The Chocolate Soldier*", Tetrassini's *Swiss Echo Song*, and the voice of an obliging nightingale captured some-

how off guard. As one's ear became attuned it became a relatively easy matter to listen to Schumann-Heink's *Silent Night* and the pleasing if sentimental duet, *Whispering Hope*, sung by Louise Homer and Alma Gluck.

About the age of fifteen I became a Caruso addict, suitably introduced by *La Donne e mobile, Vesti la giubba* and the unforgettable *Solenne in Quest' Ora* from "*La Forza del Destino*" in which he was supported by the glamorous Scotti. Calvé's Gallic verve, coupled with that of Bizet, was responsible for repeated playings of the *Habanera* and the *Gypsy Song* from "*Carmen*", also in the Red Seal "long-hair" department, although this was long before the days of this questionable expression which has undoubtedly come to stay.

Although my parents and their fellow New Jersey suburbanites were not exactly what you would call opera fans, we quite naturally had the Sextet from you know what and the Quartet from you also know what. Likewise the *Miserere* with Alda and Caruso. There was also a miscellaneous collection of *Ave Maria*'s, some rather raucous Black Seal numbers con-

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*Educated at Andover, Princeton, and Columbia, the author has been associated with the old Boston publishing house of Houghton Mifflin for several years, taking time out*

---

*occasionally to write something of his own. His most recent article was "The Disappearing Contralto", which appeared in these pages last December.*



tributed by Pryor's Band, and a further assortment of operatic selections. A friend of the family came to call one Sunday after church when I was playing the *Entrance Song* from "*Madama Butterfly*". "That is beautiful," he said; "who is singing?" When I answered "Geraldine Farrar" he snapped: "Take it off. She can't sing a note." As I happened to disagree, a 'critic' was born then and there, and it was not long afterwards that I took a considerable amount of my pocket money and used it for standing room in the Met's top balcony when Farrar made her debut as Carmen, brilliantly seconded by Bori as Micaela. From that day on I have been a confirmed opera and concert-goer and a passionate record collector. All due to an early and not particularly well-regulated exposure to Victor.

The years have brought their memories and souvenirs and many of them have been stored away for safe-keeping. All my childhood I stood in distant awe of Queena Mario, a home-town girl who made the Met. It was not until many years later, the season in which she was starred as The Duchess of Towers in Deems Taylor's "*Peter Ibbetson*", that I met her and we sat reminiscing in a hotel suite while another caller, Maestro Polacco, sat politely staring into his teacup. The town had a similar swell of pride when another local girl, Anna Case, not only made her Met debut but married Clarence H. Mackay as well.

From the spirited Frances Alda I have both the memory of an epicurean luncheon at her "Casa Mia" in Long Island and a copy of her autobiography, *Men, Women and Tenors*, inscribed to me in terms as uncomplimentary as they are unprintable. As a gift from Alma Clayburgh a worn copy of *Geraldine Farrar by Herself*, a volume antedating by some years her more formidable *Such Sweet Compulsion*. And with it a letter signed "Gerry Farrar" and containing the sentence: "I feel I must apologize for my little book; according to the latest coinage of expression it properly belongs to 'Gerry-flapper' readers". The letterhead loudly proclaims that Miss Farrar was at that time Mrs. Lou Tellegen.

A thin and infinitely desirable strip of the Met's historic gold curtain has served me



Johanna Garski  
as Brunnhilde

as an ideal bookmark, and is now secure for all time between the pages of *The Metropolitan Opera Annals*. I wish I had managed to catch and preserve under glass one of the fireflies which for years added sparkle to the first act of *Madama Butterfly*. They are the one touch missing from the effective new sets and the reason for their absence, the purists tell us, is that fireflies and cherry blossoms simply do not mix. To each its own season—and what would "*Butterfly*" be without cascading cherry blossoms in the flower duet? I was somewhat tempted to make off with one of the shocking "*Salome*" veils of Olive Fremstad, my first Sieglinde, when I found myself a few years ago at a showing of her fabulous and specially designed costumes. These were displayed in rotation on a spot-lighted mannequin as the lights were lowered for an hour of her selected recordings. A veritable wake, as it was facetiously labeled by one of the other guests. John Brownlee so scrupulously guards his early collection of Melba recordings that not even an acquisitive, light-fingered listener would dare touch one.

Thick and fast come one's operatic reminiscences, from the Met, the Manhattan, the Lexington, the old Boston Opera House, Philadelphia and Chicago, and Europe as well. Merry times with the globe-trotting Jean Madeira and Jarmila Novotna, who once had a brief flirtation with "Sherlock Holmes"... Flagstad in the armor of Brunnhilde or the robes of Isolde... Jeritz making every excuse to



Top to bottom: Mary Garden in the title role of "Louise"; Geraldine Farrar as Cio-Cio-San in "Madama Butterfly"; Frieda Hempel as Adina and Caruso as Nemorino in a scene from "L'Elisir d'Amore"

fall downstairs. . . the sinuous green snake coiling out of a window in "*Petrouchka*," and Le Petit Ygnold trying to look into one. . . the springlike Mélisande of Lucrezia Bori, and a piquante little curtain speech of hers two decades later. Once a charmer, they say, always a charmer. . . "*Manon Lescaut*" with a first act startlingly suggestive of the Inn of William the Conqueror at Dives. . . the disaster of Massenét's "*Julien*," despite Farrar and Caruso. . . "*Pagliacci*" with Martinelli. . . and again "*Pagliacci*" with Martinelli, this time a handsome and impressive

veteran, sitting in a box, and applauding Del Monaco on stage. . . John McCormack of the Emerald Isle, and Countess Lily. . .

A memorable season with no less than seven Wagnerian operas, including the entire "*Ring*". . . Visits from touring companies and traveling troupes, the Savage, the Aborn, the San Carlo, and notably the German Opera Company with the versatile Elsa Alsen singing nearly every heroine. . . Giordano's "*Cena delle Beffe*" following with scant success the dramatic version with the brothers Barrymore. . . The undeniable charm of Puccini's neglected "*La Rondine*", curtly described by the *Sun's* music critic, W. J. Henderson, as "the afternoon off of a genius". . . The coronation music of "*Boris*", during a performance of which I watched not the stage but the hands of Rachmaninoff who happened to occupy the next seat. . . A "*Cavalleria Rusticana*", clarified by another chance companion who succinctly explained the reason for Santuzza's excommunication, a fact mysteriously veiled by the "story of the opera". He should have known—as he turned out to be Milanov's admiring brother. . .

The bright spectacle of floral tributes being presented at the curtain calls, the pages overlaid and the members of the orchestra alternately dodging bouquets and baskets, wreaths, and sheaves—a happy and inspiring custom long since outmoded. . . the rustle of the programmes and the dimming of the lights. . . the magic wands of the whole gamut of conductors from Alfred Hertz to Erich Leinsdorf. . . strolls in the foyer in a daze of unbelief. . . the Opera Club. . . the restagings and remountings. . . new figures, new faces, new fresh voices. . . the Corps de Ballet. . . the first tentative radio broadcast. . . the majestic sweep of grand opera from "*Orfeo*" to "*Vanessa*". . .

Of all the opera houses in Europe, give me that subtle blending of grandeur and simplicity, that sublime fusion of gold and white and crimson reflected in mirrored tiers, with palm trees in the foyer, which is the San Carlo in Naples. Significant also are its operatic standards, values, achievements, and traditions. Again I want to hear some gala affair in Rome, not neces-

sarily at the baths of Caracalla, and would be willing to take another chance in Florence, although the travesty of Mascagni's "*Isabeau*" was only exceeded by the dullness of "*I Promessi Sposi*", Ponchielli's operatic version of the lengthy and lugubrious novel of Alessandro Manzoni, whose Requiem Verdi had composed with far more telling effect. Even the Italians yawned.

In Milan, various compensations for the boarded-up Scala, even before the bombings. . . The Galleria alive and humming. . . The Grand Hotel equally so. . . Casa Verdi in the Piazza Michelangelo, the House of Ricordi, a thunderstorm encountered on the roof of the Duomo which, in comparison, made the storm at the opening of "*Otello*" seem like a gentle summer sprinkle. . . The brilliance of the orchestra of the Vienna Staatsoper. . . London's Royal Opera House, down among the vegetables of Covent Garden, where it was my good luck, or the opposite, to witness more ballet than opera. . . that summer in Aix-les-Bains, highlighted by leisurely strolls in the foothills of the French Alps, teas at Rumpelmayer's, evenings at the Grand Cercle, and a very Gallic "*Traviata*" singularly appropriate to the gay and brittle world of the Villa des Fleurs and the tinsel trappings of the gambling rooms. I kept comparing my dwindling resources with those of Alfredo. . . a Quatorze Juillet *Marseillaise*, complete with fireworks, rendered by the flag-draped Maria Claessens of the Brussels Monnaie. . .

Early opera memoirs all stressed the sudden on-stage death of Arnold Castlemary, but not until recent times was there to be another similar shock—the lamented Leonard Warren. One of the most heroic attempts on record to keep the curtain up occurred on the historic night of December 11, 1920, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, when Caruso was starred in "*L'Elisir d'Amore*". Far from *Una furtiva lagrima*, it was a sudden hemorrhage, all too visible to the audience which kept shouting: "Stop him. Don't let him go on!" But Caruso did go on, until the end of the first act, and still ill on Christmas Eve sang through an entire performance



Above, Emma Calvé in the title role of Bizet's "*Carmen*", which was by far her most celebrated portrayal; at left, Olive Fremstad as Salome—she created the Strauss heroine for the Metropolitan in 1907

of "*La Juive*", his 607th at the Metropolitan and his farewell to opera. His only complaint when speaking of the onset of pleurisy that was to prove fatal was: "My side hurt".

No one could 'replace' Caruso, but he himself was not above stepping into the breach to help a fellow singer. Once in a Philadelphia "*Bohème*" when the Spanish basso, de Seguro, unpredictably grew hoarse, Caruso took over and sang Colline's aria—later recording it—with only a handful of listeners any the wiser. Caruso laughed it off as 'a good joke' on the con-

ductor, Polacco. The public was also unaware, claims Geraldine Farrar, that in another ill-starred "*Bohème*" she herself sang nearly a third of Rodolfo's role as an assist to the ailing Bonci.

Last-minute substitutions have always intrigued me, as I was present at one of the most dramatic of all, at the old Boston Opera House. Mary Garden was to sing Monna Vanna to the Princivalle of Lucien Muratore, but an eleventh-hour cold necessitated a change of cast. The frantic Director (I still have the next day's clippings) was fortunate enough to secure the able services of a relatively unknown soprano, Marguerite Beriza, but the crisis was not generally known backstage, and a shocked and bewildered Muratore suddenly found himself making passionate love to a divorced wife with whom he was not even on speaking terms. A further embarrassment arose from the fact that his current wife, the resplendent Lina Cavalieri, was flashing her famed jewels from a conspicuous box. Director Henry Russell, who had manipulated this sleight-of-hand, heard the performance hidden away in the top balcony, having left word that he had been "obliged to retire early".

A miracle possibly, but mere routine in the operatic world, was Frederick Jagel's mid-performance substitution for Martinelli in an "*Aida*" matinee when broadcasting was in its infancy. As one of the listeners, Jagel sensed that something was wrong, jumped into a taxi, and presented himself at the stage door. It is not recorded whether or not Martinelli threw his arms around the other tenor's neck, but the show went on, with Jagel as Rhadames.

Tristans, it seems, are always getting into trouble. I have heard two during a single performance, but the record is now up to three. Are illnesses genuine or psychosomatic? Edward Johnson used to tell how stage fright once hit him in Atlanta in the days when he was a tenor, not yet a Director. That night he was to sing Faust, a role with which he was thoroughly familiar. It was not even a case of first-night jitters. All he knew was that he was stuttering, his teeth were chattering, and that he was scared to death. He thought he could not get out of bed, and certainly

never make the opera house. But he had to, and he did. Then and there he licked it. Old-timers may recall the tragic case of the never-say-die Polish dynamo, Ganna Walska; her voice suffered almost total eclipse whenever a professional appearance was imminent.

Probably the most widely publicized ringing down of the curtain of all time, with headlines screaming it from New York to Timbuctoo, was *l'affaire Callas* (or "Callastrophe") in Rome. What is most surprising about the whole fracas is the fact that there was no noble Roman lady willing and eager to step into Norma's sandals. They ordered things differently a half century ago in Paris, when Mary Garden, a complete unknown, was literally pried out of her seat to don the shirtheast of Louise to replace the soprano, Mlle. Riouton, who had broken down and made a hurried exit. Mlle. Garden went on to fame, Mlle. Riouton—"still running down the street", to quote Mary's own words—to oblivion. Had such clairvoyance prevailed in Rome, who knows but what another Mary Garden might have emerged from artistic limbo?

Most opera companies have a supply of reliable and trained pinch-hitters, but sometimes odd effects are produced. Gertrud Wettergren, once summoned in an emergency, sang a Carmen with conviction, but in her native Northern tongue. This was Swedish, while the rest of the cast continued in French. An innovation, yes, but one that did not dampen Don José's Southern ardor. Opera-goers of the Golden Age did not balk at mixed languages, but today casts are assembled with more care.

Several of these stories may be apocryphal, but they point to the fact that such calamities can happen, they have, and they still do. Only recently in a Montreal "*Madama Butterfly*" the child, Trouble, panicked at the last moment and refused to go on, and another had literally to be swept in off the sidewalk. Apparently, in the world of opera, Trouble is here to stay. But fascination and challenge along with it.

My thanks to Victor for introducing me to all this.

# FROM THE EDITOR:

**A**FTER a long slough of despond, predicted all too accurately in these pages, the ailing record industry seems to be on the way back to health. As of this moment no less than three important labels of yore are once again in the picture. One of them, Urania, plans to remaster and reissue all but a dozen or so items from its former catalogue, and then to add new material monthly beginning with some of the worth-while releases already "in the can". Another honored label, Haydn Society, has been reactivated after a two-year absence and will start by restoring to circulation everything listed in its catalogue as of 1959. Finally, and most impressively of all, Westminster is being launched anew (as a subsidiary of Am-Par) with a staggering three hundred discs, including a fair number of exciting new releases—for instance, a brace of Mozart concerti and a Chopin recital by the sensationally gifted Fou Ts'ong. . . . While we are "ringing in the new", any amount of conjecture is possible with the news that Mercury has been sold to Philips of Holland—the General Electric of Europe. Philips formerly distributed American Columbia recordings, and the latter firm accommodated Philips material, mostly on its Epic label. Many of the artists identified with Epic will now move to Mercury (certainly the Concertgebouw will), and that leaves the future of Epic somewhat obscure, but on the other hand any label that can begin its roster with the Cleveland Orchestra has a good head start. One way or another we can be sure of getting more records like those discussed by our Amsterdam correspondent, George Louis Mayer, on page 922. . . . Felicitations to the former Mr. E. R. "Ted" Lewis, one of the great men of the record industry (he is chairman of the board of British Decca and president of London in the U. S. A.), who has been made a Knight Bachelor by Queen Elizabeth and who therefore will have to be addressed now as "Sir Ted" at the very least. It is a small enough tribute, and a belated one at that, to a man who has done so much for the phonographic art. . . . Those friends of

John Brownlee who are envious of his Melba collection (see page 917) will be pleased to know that HMV has just issued an LP comprising Dame Nellie's most celebrated sides. It follows that this disc will be brought out here as one of the "Great Recordings of the Century". . . . Add to our recent batch of opera futures a "*Tannhäuser*" from Angel, scheduled for mid-November; Fischer-Dieskau, Hopf, Frick, Grümmer, and Schech are featured in this Berlin performance under Franz Konwitschny. . . . Jascha Heifetz has recorded the Bach Double Concerto with his protégé Eric Friedman. . . . Igor Kipnis is editing (and will take part in the recording of) Rameau's *Le Berger fidèle* for Eleanor Steber, who is in a manner of speaking one-half of the St/And label (her husband, whose surname is Andrews, is the other half). . . . Those many who have acquired the Toscanini rehearsal record by contributing to the Musicians' Foundation (see page 962) will want to hear about another limited-edition Toscanini disc being made available as a benefit to the Greenwich Village (N. Y. C.) Symphony. This is a 45 r.p.m. 12-inch coupling of the Rossini Sonata No. 3 in C and the Vivaldi Concerto Grosso in D minor, Op. 3, No. 11, taken from NBC Symphony broadcasts of 1952 and 1954, respectively. These performances have not been released otherwise, and apparently will not be, but they can be had by sending a contribution of \$25 to the G. V. S., 260 Sixth Avenue, New York City 12. . . . According to the authoritative Schwann, eight of the twelve best-selling "classical" LP sets and albums just now are vocal (Price, Bjoerling, and Sutherland recitals, Victor's "*Turandot*", London's "*Tristan*", the Bloch *Sacred Service* on Columbia), two are piano concerti (Richter's Brahms Second and Cliburn's Tchaikovsky First), and two are orchestral miscellany (*1812* etc. on Mercury and *Wellington's Victory* on the same label). I don't see anything surprising about this list; I just thought you might be interested in what the other guy is buying, too.

—J.L.

# LETTER FROM HOLLAND

## *Five Dutch Modernists, Mengelberg, and Heynis*

By GEORGE LOUIS MAYER

AMSTERDAM

THE WORK of contemporary Dutch composers is not well known in America. We only hear samples from time to time when the Concertgebouw Orchestra pays us a call and programs a native composition or two. Philips has now issued a series of recordings of works by some of the most prominent of Dutch moderns showing very clearly that the Dutch have an export commodity which, while not so well known as their cheese and chocolate, is worthy of interest in other parts of the globe. None of the compositions reviewed here is particularly adventurous; they will outrage or repel no one. This is not to say that they are old-fashioned modern or eclectic to the point of seeming already familiar on first hearing. Neither is true. They avoid that self-conscious air of modernists who are unwilling to tax their audiences' endurance and who have deliberately attempted to make their compositions as palatable as possible. On the other hand, they have not, under the protective name of individuality, failed to compose music that can be communicated to the audiences of

their own generation. At the same time they have achieved individuality of expression. All are accomplished masters of their craft and their works have a striking honesty and sincerity of expression.

The string quartets of Marius Flothuis and Guillaume Landré are particularly engaging and, for me, the most satisfying of the works sampled here. Flothuis' five-movement work dates from 1951-52 and makes use of the "Kiemceltechniek" popular with Dutch composers—the device of building a composition from a kernel motive. Flothuis' motive is made up of but two notes but he has, from this modest idea, fashioned a work of great persuasion and compelling beauty. The *Lento*, with its droning, repeated-note bass, which continues throughout about half of the movement, and the rhapsodic *Allegro appassionato*, are especially striking. Throughout, the music aims for and achieves expressive content of impressive holding power.

Scarcely less interesting is Landré's Quartet No. 2, which dates from 1942-43 and which won the Willem Pijper prize in

**FLOTHUIS, Marius:** *String Quartet, Op. 44*; **LANDRÉ, Guillaume:** *String Quartet No. 2*; The Netherlands String Quartet. Philips A 00492 L.

**ORTHEL, Léon:** *Symphony No. 2, Op. 18*, "*Piccola Sinfonia*"; **ANDRIESSEN, Hendrik:** *Kuhnau Variations*; *Ricer-care*; The Hague Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Willem van Otterloo. Philips A 02047 L.

**ESCHER, Rudolf:** *Le Tombeau de Ravel*; **ANDRIESSEN, Hendrik:** *Symphonic Étude*; *Alma Musica* (in the Escher) and the Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Bernard Haitink. Philips A 02052 L.

**BACH, J. S.:** *Cantata BWV 169* "Gott soll

*allein mein Herze haben*"; **RITTER, Christian:** *O amantissime sponse Jesu*; Aafje Heynis (contralto), Albert de Klerk (organ); Netherlands Chamber Orchestra and the Netherlands Bach Society Chorus conducted by Anthon van der Horst. Philips A 00533 L.

**BRAHMS, Johannes:** *Ein deutsches Requiem*; **BACH, J. S.:** *St. Matthew Passion—Choruses and Chorales*; Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg with Jo Vincent (soprano) and Max Kloos (baritone); The Toonkunsrkoor and (in the Bach) the Boys Chorus, "Zanglust". Philips W 09912/13 L.

1958. Landré's melodic skill combined with his use of strong, rugged rhythms gives this work its impetus and interest. The second of the three movements, a *Molto lento*, is a somber evocation of the despairing times in which it was composed and makes a strong impression. The concluding *Rondo* makes use of melodic material in the preceding movements.

Both of these quartets are important contributions to the literature. These scores should appeal not only to chamber-music enthusiasts but also to those looking for modern scores which they can honestly, without pretense, enjoy for their intrinsic beauty and the pleasure they give. The performance by the Netherlands String Quartet is exceptionally good and the recording is excellent.

Hendrik Andriessen's *Symphonic Étude* is so called because the composer considers it as a "study" with a compositional device. His gimmick is a nod in the direction of the twelve-tone composers by employing as starting point a theme made up of the twelve tones of the octave. But once the theme is stated he retreats into more traditional musical language and develops the work in conventional terms. Andriessen is both a composer of music for Roman Catholic Church services and an organist and he makes no bones about his attachment to the music of the Bach and pre-Bach eras. It is perhaps this inclination which makes the *Symphonic Étude* sound a bit forced and unconvincing. Certainly he sounds more at home in both the *Ricercare* and the *Kuhnau Variations*, which I find to be more satisfying works. One of the themes of the *Ricercare* is built on the notes B A C H (B flat, A, C, B in English

terminology) and the work was composed in 1949 shortly before the bicentenary commemorations of Bach's death. Despite its affiliations with the baroque, it is music of our time and a very fetching, even racy, piece. The *Kuhnau Variations* are another tribute to the past but, just as in the *Ricercare*, it is the composer's own originality (and skill) which is the chief interest. Neither is merely academic or dull. The Kuhnau theme is a beauty and the variations are both skillful and appealing, the impassioned *Adagio* being one of the most attractive. All three works are well performed and recorded.

Léon Orthel's one-movement *Symphony No. 2, Op. 18, "Piccola Sinfonia"*, is a very compact work in which the composer has superimposed the four movements of the classical symphony on the traditional first-movement sonata-form. The exposition serves as a kind of slow movement after the opening introduction and the development section is marked "*scherzando*", etc. Unlike their German neighbors, the Dutch symphonists strive for brevity in their works and this method of achieving it is not without its merits. Sibelius used this trick in his *Symphony No. 7*. Orthel's work is by turns rugged and tender. The *staccato* theme of the *scherzando* is a bit commonplace but elsewhere the score has distinction, if scarcely greatness.

*Le Tombeau de Ravel* of Rudolf Escher is a sextet for flute, oboe, violin, viola, cello, and harpsichord in seven movements using old French dance forms. The complete sextet is only used in three of the movements. The remainder are for various combinations of the six with the second and sixth movements being short airs for solo cello and flute, respectively. Escher's

Léon Orthel, Guillaume Landré, Hendrik Andriessen, and Marius Flothuis (© Hans de Leeuw, Baarn)







Aafje  
Heynis

handling of the instruments individually and in combination is excellent, and his working out of the formal elements in the dance movements show the hand of a skillful and imaginative craftsman. On the whole, however, there is a bit too much craftsmanship and not enough imagination. In its entirety it fails to captivate, despite excellences in parts of the work—notably in the *Pavane* and the *Forlane*. It suffers most from the lack of any really strong contrasts and distinctive, memorable melodic material. So, for all its skill and subtlety, the work disappoints. The *Alma Musica* is considered to be one of Holland's finest chamber groups and, indeed, they do play handsomely.

The Dutch contralto Aafje Heynis, who made such a favorable impression with her recording of Brahms' *Alto Rhapsody* with van Beinum and the Concertgebouw Orchestra some time ago, is one of the leading concert and oratorio soloists of The Netherlands. While the general timbre of her voice and the ease of her delivery do hold reminders of the late Kathleen Ferrier, this similarity has been overstated and overstressed in many quarters. Her performances are worthy of consideration apart from the comparison. The recording of the Bach cantata, *Gott soll allein mein Herze haben*, BWV 169, which was made during an actual performance in the Holland Festival in 1959, is stunning. The work itself is a fascinating one. The opening *Sinfonia* is a gem and is beautifully played by the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Anthon van

der Horst and the sound is enhanced enormously by the delightful organ of St. Janskerk, Gouda, the church in which the performance was given.

The aria, *Gott soll allein mein Herze haben*, is one of those typical, smooth, easy-flowing Bach airs. *Stirb in mir, Welt*, however, is an incredible piece of vocal music quite unlike the usual Bach. The unpredictable vocal line is angular with wide and bold skips, unusual use of coloratura passages, and unexpected harmonic developments which give the work an over-all romantic flavor. It is the kind of aria which is extremely difficult to make "sound" and really come off in performance but Aafje Heynis has met the challenge with remarkable success. There are moments when the difficulties tax her vocal security and find her a bit less than comfortable which, had this not been a live performance, would probably have been altered by the tape doctors. But it is an incredibly difficult aria and one reason why the performance is so satisfying is that some of the difficulty shows and gives it tension and life.

In contrast to this musically so sophisticated aria, the solo cantata by Christian Ritter from about 1700 with which it is coupled, *O amantissime sponse Jesu*, seems both musically and emotionally incredibly naïve. It is, however, a naïveté which is completely disarming and delightful. The warmth and affection addressed to Jesus in this rather passionate Latin text is fully realized in the score but with the simplest and most economical musical means. The little *arioso* sections are full of charm and the treatment of individual words is often highly effective despite the simplicity with which the effects are achieved. Here too, Aafje Heynis shows herself to be a fine artist. Her performances are more notable for musical poise than for any great imagination, and at moments one does wish for a more assertive musical personality. While in both of these works classic restraint is proper there is room for performing within a somewhat broader emotional range than the one the contralto has chosen to limit herself.

The twelfth and last of the performances by Willem Mengelberg with the Con-



certgebouw Orchestra to be issued by Philips, from the transcriptions of 1939-40 performances preserved by Radio Hilversum, is Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, a magnificent romantic reading of great power and drama. While some of the tempi variations and dynamic emphasis seem to be exaggerated by today's more astringent ideals, it is questionable which approach comes closer to the composer's own ideal in such a romantic score.

Mengelberg could obviously think romantically and at the same time coolly calculate the exact dynamics of every note in a phrase and shape the phrase precisely as he knew it must be to achieve the effect he wanted. This ability to think big and small at the same time is what gives his performance its great conviction and magnitude. The choral singing is often breath-taking in its precision and control. While yearning for the good old days of music-making is an idle and wasteful occupation, since every generation must make music in its own terms, it is good to hear performances of these other periods and it doesn't seem quite so silly to yearn for the days when sufficient rehearsal time meant something more than it means today. For there is nothing accidental about the kind of performance perfection achieved here whether one agrees with the performance style or not.

Jo Vincent's cool ethereal vocalism made her a renowned oratorio singer of the period in which this recording was made. Unfortunately, the recording technique used to record the soloists on this occasion does her a disservice. This was an actual performance and it is all too obvious that she is singing to fill a large hall and that the microphone was capturing the singing too close. Things that undoubtedly would not have seemed pronounced in the hall are here emphasized. I feel sure that tonally she sounded better than she seems to here. Otherwise, her performance is lovely and shows a real understanding of the ways and means of singing Brahms. Max Kloos is hampered by a voice which doesn't descend with tonal richness and power as low as Brahms asks it to go. His first solo is also marred by an overly emotional approach which lacks sincerity. His

second solo, however, is much better, and contains some exceptionally fine details. His singing of the words, "*ein Geheimnis*" in the phrase, "*Siehe, ich sage euch ein Geheimnis*", is simply magical.

The fourth side of this two-disc set contains excerpts from Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. Since Mengelberg's performance of the complete work has been issued in America, the conductor's extreme, romantic Bach style is already familiar. This kind of Bach performance is really no longer acceptable. But the chorus performance within this style is exceptional.

These recordings are far from perfect technically. There is considerable surface noise in spots and some rumbles and grumbles which sometimes take the place of the orchestral details one is listening for. The chorus, however, is well recorded. The dynamic range of the recording is wide and good. A bit of dial-twisting should result in acceptable sound on most machines.

It is not yet known whether the Mengelberg series will be issued in America. Collectors should not, therefore, fail to note that this series is available in Europe and through European dealers. The Aafje Heynis disc and the recordings of the Dutch moderns are also not available in America and there are, as yet, no definite plans for their release.

Willem Mengelberg (1871-1951) in his Amsterdam study



# BOOK REVIEWS

**20TH-CENTURY MUSIC IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE**, by *Arthur Cohn*. ("The Collector's Series".) Lip-pincott, \$3.75; Keystone Paperback KB-23, \$1.95.

*A Guest Review*  
By **NICOLAS SLONIMSKY**

**A**RTHUR COHN is one of those unperformed American composers whose music is superior to at least 50% of the modern works that enjoy a first (and last) performance. True, he scorns the common formulas, whether in the infra-modern neo-classical or the ultradodeca-phonic serialist direction. He composes as he damn pleases. He also writes music on faith, relying on the integrity of a virtuoso or a conductor commissioning a work. In his catalogue there is an hour-long flute concerto which will probably remain unperformed until the 21st century, when electronic synthesizers are perfected to such an extent that they will play a piece by scanning a score without preliminary programming. Recently, Cohn made his mark as a composer with a piece written for a record number of percussion instruments, which got his name into *Time*. His name is also duly entered in music dictionaries in several languages, including the new Riemann, the Swedish *Sohlmans Musiklexikon*, the Danish *Musikens Hjem Hvad Hvor*, and the supplement to the Dutch *Muzieklexicon*, not to mention my own edition of *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*.

Whatever Cohn's frustrations might be as an unperformed composer, he covers up his traumata with excellent aplomb, thanks to the versatility of his musical talents. He

can still play a mighty good violin, and he has developed an energetic career as orchestral conductor in and around New York City, totting up quite a repertory, from Bach to Bartók and beyond. His musical curiosity is unlimited, and he has amassed an astounding amount of information on the obscurest composers in musicdom. On his music-buying tour of Europe in 1949 (on which the undersigned went along), he gathered hundreds upon hundreds of orchestra works, including manuscripts, for the Edwin A. Fleisher Music Collection of the Free Library of Philadelphia, of which he was director for many years.

As though this were not enough, Arthur Cohn proceeded some years ago to compile an enormous encyclopedia of chamber music, the manuscript of which had reached the stage of galley proofs when the original angel suddenly withdrew the necessary funds and the project collapsed. Cohn kept paying for the storage of the plates out of his own pocket until he decided to bow to the inevitable, and let the plates be junked. But a set of proofs is still in existence, and one may hope that some enlightened publisher will retrieve Cohn's encyclopedia and bring it to the public.

In the meantime, here is Arthur Cohn's slim volume devoted to recorded works by 20th-century composers of the western hemisphere. Well, not so slim—256 pages. Twenty-seven names are represented, among them four Latin Americans (Chávez, Ginastera, Villa-Lobos, and Revuel-tas), two naturalized European composers (Ernest Bloch and Edgar Varèse), and two European-born ones who have received their education in America (Gian Carlo Menotti and Lukas Foss). The rest are composers born in the United States.

Although Cohn shuns formal biographies, biographical references are strewn liberally throughout the text so that the reader gets a rounded idea of what each composer represents in his background.

*The hypercritically errorphobic and otherwise uniquely erudite Nicolas Slonimsky, author of the famous Music Since 1900 and equally invaluable volumes, is generally acknowledged to know more about the tonal art of the 20th century than anyone else.*

His literary style is informal, informed, and informative. His great asset is that he actually knows the music he is writing about, and understands it from the inside, as only a practicing composer can. He does not indulge in rhetorical flights of metaphorical fancy out of sheer logorrhea, but he uses his own brand of vivid language, ranging freely from hifalutin jargon to homely colloquialism, sometimes mixing them eclectically in such phrases as "the correspondivities [!] of the tonal and the twelve-tone methods are made to jell" or "pops coloratives, Kostelanetized fiddles, and seasoning taken from Morton Gould's cook book."

One perceives in Cohn's attitude a great fervor for innovators such as Ives and Varèse, but no prejudice; there is no air of condescension for anyone. The format of the book is dictated by the availability of recordings. Works in every genre are analyzed: operas, ballets, symphonies, concertos, chamber music, choruses. And Cohn has a special interest for out-of-the-way pieces, musically important but not conspicuous in the record catalogues.

One of the most impassionate bits of writing is reserved for Wallingford Riegger. Cohn's book was published just about the time of Riegger's fantastically tragic death (he tripped over a dog leash in the street, and died of a brain injury after an emergency operation), and it so happened that this chapter was the last thing that Riegger read about himself.

Virtually all American works of any importance are represented, thanks to the rapidity with which recordings follow performances nowadays. But such is the productive tempo of our time that this volume already has a signal omission, the Second String Quartet by Elliott Carter, a formidable piece of music in which all the ultramodern techniques appear in a concentrated form, and which despite its forbidding nature has copped just about every music prize there is—the Pulitzer Prize, the New York Music Critics Circle award, the UNESCO prize. Its recording came after the publication of Cohn's book.

Along with analyses, annotations, and capsule descriptions of the style of each composer and each work, Cohn tenders



Arthur Cohn

practical advice to the record buyer, and offers terse judgments on the quality of performance. What is refreshing about these judgments is their definiteness—no maybes, no pulling punches, whether the positive or the negative is being accentuated. On some occasions Cohn corrects the errors in the liners. Does he err himself? If he does, I have been unable to catch him. The only quarrel one may pick with him is his use of the word "masterful" for "masterly", but then even professional literary stylists make this substitution. However, Fowler expressly says: Thou shalt not equate masterful with masterly. Arthur Cohn ought to comply.

The degree of quotability in Cohn's little essays is very high. Here are a few samples to give an idea of his style in its elevated and homely aspects: "Bloch was a Jewish cosmopolitan who refused to travel along a single track." "Carter's music is philosophic in the sense that it avoids parochialism." "Chávez has composed abstract works which are as basically Mexican as his nationalistically titled productions." And here is a sentence about Copland's *Appalachian Spring*: "Copland's music flows like a *Moldau*, its tunes breathe the simplicity and spirit of folklore, absorbed to such an extent that it has become the composer's own." Cohn describes Henry Cowell as "an intrepid experimentalist with the stubborn temperament of the real creator." One can continue to quote these quotable quotations right through the book, from Samuel Barber to Ben Weber.

**Beethoven: Letters, Journals and Conversations**, translated and edited by Michael Hamburger. Doubleday Anchor paperback, xxviii, 290 pp., \$1.45.

By JOHN W. BARKER

THE PUBLICATION of source materials is a popular pastime these days. And there is no denying that it is a healthy thing to let readers experience for themselves some delving into the ultimate fonts of our information on given subjects. Mr. Hamburger in his Introduction senses this in his characterization of his book: "The purpose of the present collection of documents is to provide the reader with a basis upon which he may construct his own biography of Beethoven." (p. vii)

The bulk of this anthology is composed of letters, most of them by Beethoven himself. None of these is a literary masterpiece. But, after all, what is really of interest is what they reveal of the man and his personality. Writes Hamburger:

It is usual to preface a selection from Beethoven's letters with a regret that these letters tell us so little about their author; yet, brief as it is, even the present selection should prove the absurdity of such a regret. Unlike those artists whose letters are intended for posterity, Beethoven wrote with a candor and a spontaneous impulse which are far more revealing than the studied confessions and elaborate reticences of more accomplished stylists. No one can deny that Beethoven's letters tell us a great deal about his daily life, his practical difficulties, his illnesses, friendships and aspirations; what is more, they reproduce his mental processes so faithfully that the reader may experience a sensation of almost embarrassing intimacy. . . . (p. viii)

This selection presents a well-rounded cross-section of letters which do serve admirably to show different facets of the composer's thought and activity. What may surprise some readers is Beethoven's sense of humor. It is often caustic or boorish, and it is perhaps not so genuinely carefree and unaffected as Mozart's zesty gaiety. But it is not behind Mozart's in its way. For example, he closes one of his letters to a publisher with the farewell: "In the hope that you are conducting yourselves in an orderly and lawful man-

ner, I am your, etc./Devoted B." (p. 170) To Anton Schindler, his future biographer, he wrote the following note in 1823:

Best of friends,

In accordance with the following hattisherif you will attend at the *Mariahilf* coffee-house at 4 o'clock this afternoon in order to be tried for various punishable offences. If this hs. should not reach you to-day, then it is your duty to attend at my house at 2 o'clock to-morrow afternoon, at which time, after partaking of bread and water, you will be placed under arrest for the duration of twenty-four hours.

L. V.! Beethoven (pp 209-10)

When his brother wrote to Beethoven and signed himself as "land-owner", the composer wrote back, signing himself as "brain-owner" (as Stumpff tells us, p. 221). With a reference to the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna, he began a letter of June, 1818, to its director with the salutation: "Dearest Member of the Society of the Enemies of Music of the Austrian Empire"; and after a variety of boisterous absurdities, he extended the farewell: "I wish you a regular movement of the bowels and the most beautiful of privies." (pp. 161-2)—a tidbit which Mozart himself would have envied. Beethoven also frequently incorporated in his letters little musical snatches, extending sometimes to full canons, usually of very humorous character. One of his funniest such examples is a letter of 1802 to some Viennese nobleman (pp. 35-6).

One may also observe something of Beethoven's extensive background, or at least interest, in literature. His letters are full of Classical allusions, and he was particularly fond of Homer. He was deeply interested in German poetry, especially that of Goethe. And he loved Shakespeare, who also provided the composer with at least one frequent and favorite epithet for a friend. "Beethoven calls Schuppanzigh Sir John Falstaff, not a bad name considering the figure of this excellent violin player", notes Sir George Smart (p. 241). On the other side of the coin are such famous documents as the *Heiligenstadt Testament* and the so-called "Letter(s) to the Unknown (or Immortal) Beloved", as well as some moving early references to his growing deafness.

But Beethoven himself is not the only contributor to this collection, and herein lies much of its value. For it is through the words of others, in letters or memoirs or simple records of conversation, that we can get some of the most penetrating insights into Beethoven's personality and behavior. One can understand his sense of isolation from ordinary life, and consequently much of his personal eccentricity, when one notes the way in which conversation had to be conducted with the increasingly hard-of-hearing master. And one can savor his admiration for such composers as Handel, Bach, Mozart, Haydn, and Cherubini, as well as his estimates of such others as Schubert, Weber, Rossini, Spohr, and Spontini, not to mention also his opinions and comparisons of the respective levels of musical taste among the Viennese and the English. Bettina Brentano von Arnim's comments on Beethoven and Goethe, especially on the famous Teplitz meeting, are of course well known. But also valuable are such recollections as those by the Baron de Trémont (pp. 62-6) and Schindler (pp. 171-2), to mention but two examples.

What is the merit of this book is not that it makes available anything new. These texts are accessible in one form or another elsewhere. Beethoven's Letters, for example, are available in English translations by J. S. Shedlock from Kalischer's edition of the texts (London,

1909, 2 vols.). The real point here is that Hamburger has brought these selections together to form a varied and of itself well-rounded portrait of the composer in his own and his contemporaries' words. The layman who may not wish to pore through complete collections of texts will be able to read this anthology and, whether or not he chooses then to write his own biography, will at least have gotten a vivid and fully documented picture of Beethoven.

The only index to the book is one of personal names, but this doubles as a useful vehicle for identifying these persons. There is a brief chronology of Beethoven's life at the beginning; and there are also notes to the text. Hamburger might have done a fuller job of explaining some background, such as Beethoven's stormy relations with his family and especially with his nephew Karl. But on the whole he has managed to identify satisfactorily most references to persons, compositions, etc. There are no illustrations, save only a clump of pictures on the cover.

In all, this is an extremely fine anthology and a first-rate addition to the growing realm of paperbacks, as well as to the music shelf in general. It is a book which should delight and edify everyone interested in Beethoven and his music. And since that includes just about every music lover, it should be investigated by all.

## Other books received for review

LEONARD BERNSTEIN: *The Man, His Work, and His World*, by John Briggs. (With a Discography and 50 photographs.) World, \$4.50.

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE IN THE TIMES OF MOZART AND BEETHOVEN (THE LOST TRADITION IN MUSIC: II), by Fritz Rothschild. Oxford University Press, \$4.80.

VERDI 2 (Bulletin No. 2 of The Institute of Verdi Studies); Istituto di Studi Verdiani, Via del Conservatorio 27, Parma, Italy, Lire 3,000.

HI-FI STEREO HANDBOOK (Revised and Enlarged Edition), by William F.

Boyce. Howard W. Sams/Bobbs-Merrill, Paperback No. HFB-2, \$3.95.

CHILDREN'S SONGS FROM JAPAN, by Florence White and Kazuo Akiyama; illustrations by Toshihiko Suzuki. Edward B. Marks Music Corp., \$4.95.

FOLKSINGERS AND FOLKSONGS IN AMERICA, by Ray M. Lawless. Duell, Sloan and Pearce, \$10.

GUIDEBOOK TO THE BALLET, by Cyril Swinson. Macmillan, \$1.95.

MOZART'S LIBRETTOS, translated by Robert Pack and Marjorie Lelash (with original German and Italian texts). Meridian, Paperback No. M-80, \$1.75.

# Other Reviews

(including stereo®)

**T**HERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.

—William Cowper

**BABBITT:** *Composition for Four Instruments* (1948); *Composition for Viola and Piano* (1950); **BAVICCHI:** *Trio No. 4, Op. 33*; *Short Sonata for Violin and Harpsichord, Op. 39*; John Wummer (flute); Stanley Drucker (clarinet); Peter Marsh (violin); Donald McCall (cello); Walter Trampler (viola); Alvin Bauman (piano); David Glazer (clarinet); Matthew Raimondi (violin); Assunta Dell'Aquila (harp); Robert Brink (violin); Daniel Pinkham (harpsichord). Composers Recordings CRI-138, \$4.98.

▲THE greatest interest of Babbitt's four-instrument, one-movement piece is the rich variety of its instrumentation. Its means give expression, form, and contour, working hand in hand with the expressive realities of the musical prosody. The four colors (two each of winds and strings) are used to give weight and density, texture and sonority, color, light, and shade divisions within the whole. In a work for four players, there are fifteen possible different instrumental combinations (4 solos, 6 duets, 4 trios, 1 quartet). Babbitt makes certain to use each and every one! While such variable combinations occur en route in works by hundreds of composers, in this instance each use is drawn over a sufficient period of time (save in one case) to register as a specific combination of

one of the total fifteen, and is not a transitory haphazardness. A canvas of changing colors combines with the dissemination of the musical text. Babbitt's *Composition* is a play in the field of solo, duet, and trio categories by use of an instrumental quartet. But this is only part of the rigid musical contract being enforced, for this is a fully "organized" music, covering all elements. Nevertheless there is this to emphasize: it demands concentrated hearing, but it is all beautifully shaped and executed by this totally serious composer. The other work, for viola and piano, is also written without compromise; the work bristles with difficulties for performer and listener. Analysis of this music demands the score. However, analysis is not mandatory for considering the unmeasured scope of this measured music—music of shifting predictions which lead to still further suppositions.

Bavichchi's music is dictated by chromaticism and polyphonic mixture derived from liberated lines (read: "elements" as the composer types them, or motives as most listeners will label them). Neither of his works utilize ordinary instrumental combinations, and thus there are no stale sonic sensations, only the slightly explosive intoxications of oppositional sounds, furthered by the instrumentation which consists of dissimilar timbres. However,

there are reminders in this music of dated compositions: angularity of line, motoric rhythms here and there, and the stale neoclassic order. This produces a looseness in the music. As formal as Bovicchi makes his music (the liner notes supply this information) the product is formally unbounded. And the numerative increase lessens the denominative value. —A.C.

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**J. S. BACH:** *Three Sonatas for Harpsichord and Viola da Gamba*. Sylvia Marlowe (harpsichord) and Bernard Greenhouse (cello). Decca DL-10036, \$4.98, or Stereo DL-710036, \$5.98.

⑤THE sonatas for harpsichord and viola da gamba were written in 1720, when Bach was engaged at his post of *Kapellmeister* to Prince Leopold at Cöthen. This was a brief secular interlude in Bach's career which produced such works as the first part of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, the Brandenburg Concerti, the solo sonatas for violin and cello, and the English Suites. These sonatas see the harpsichord emerge from its somewhat passive role as continuo and become an active participant with the cello. It assumes a role of nearly orchestral importance, as in the Sonata No. 1, when it supplies both bass and treble, surrounding the cello's inner voice. The clarity of Miss Marlowe's registration and the appropriately dry sound of Greenhouse combine here with lovely effect. The sound is admirably clean, the stereo effect non-obtrusive, and the surfaces unusually silent. —R.J.

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**J. S. BACH:** *Violin Concerto No. 2 in E*; **NARDINI:** *Violin Concerto in E minor*; **VIVALDI:** *Violin Concerto in G minor, Op. 12, No. 1*; Mischa Elman (violin); the Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Vladimir Golschmann. Vanguard VRS-1059, \$4.98, or Stereo VSD-2073, \$5.95.

⑤THIS recording leaves little question as to what is meant by the "Elman tone". A few violinists have flashier, more biting techniques, and purer intonation, but I doubt if there is a more eloquent or moving—certainly no more uniquely characteristic—sound in all of music than that which Elman has been coaxing from his instru-

ment for the past half-century, the despair of purists (especially baroque purists) notwithstanding. His free use of a near-portamento, a feature of the "old" style of violin playing, lends a plasticity and shape to his phrases which can be achieved in no other way. It is especially noticeable in the *Adagio* of the Bach and the *Andante cantabile* of the Nardini, and it is always done with taste, never becoming sentimental or sloshy. Vanguard has graced Elman's performances with clean, clear, and well-balanced sound. —D.H.M.

•  
**BEETHOVEN:** *Symphony No. 3 in E flat, Op. 55 ("Eroica")*; Berliner Philharmoniker conducted by Ferenc Fricsay. Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft Stereo SLPM-138038, \$6.98.

Krips.....Everest 3087  
Szell.....Epic 1001  
Klemperer.....Angel 35853

⑤CAST in a classic, rather than a heroic, mold, the Fricsay *Eroica* is notable for its cool attention to detail and an almost mathematical precision of balances, both structural and dynamic. Not an overwhelming performance, but a fascinating one which will remain interesting much longer than a more superficially "exciting" one. It would seem that DGG has revised its recording technique recently. No longer do their orchestras sound distant and echo-shrouded, their stereo discs lacking in separation. The latest releases feature excellent separation and a natural amount of reverberation with resulting gain in clarity in the high frequencies. The surfaces are startlingly clean, as indeed they have always been. —R.J.

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**BRAHMS:** *Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68*; London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Antal Dorati. Mercury Stereo SR-90268, \$5.98.

Klemperer.....Angel S-35481  
Walter (mono only).....Columbia ML-5124  
Bernstein.....Columbia MS-6202

⑤ONE cannot deny that Dorati keeps things moving. His tempi are not metronomically fast (with the shocking exception of the noble finale), but the certain anxiety and near-nervousness of his beat tend to give the impression of a rushed pace throughout. In the third and last movements especially there is not a breath of air



to be had. How different from the warmth of Walter, or the expansive eloquence of Klemperer! Under Dorati the climaxes are often savagely punctuated, and phrases have a clear, almost classical definition. Those who shy away from a ponderous, over-emotional Brahms may like this, but not I. —D.H.M.

**BRUCKNER:** *Symphony No. 9 in D minor* (Original Version); Hamburg State Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Joseph Keilberth. Telefunken TC-8043, \$1.98, or Stereo TCS-18043, \$2.98. (56 mins.)

Horenstein, Pro Musica (52') ..... Vox 8040  
Jochum, Bavarian Radio (57') ..... Decca DX-139  
Van Beinum, Concertgebouw (58') ..... Epic 3401  
Walter, Columbia (59') ..... Col. 5571, 56171

§THE wonders that stereo can do in realizing the glowing inner colors of this unfinished symphony, as I suggested in reviewing the Columbia recording last December, are only dimly embodied in this Telefunken version. The woodwind figures, for example, do not stand in the same vivid relief, and the bass, not terribly good in the Columbia, is still more deficient here. As in the Columbia stereo, the upper and lower strings are laterally opposed, rather than the antiphonal violins, which would lend a more essential if less dramatic clarity to the texture of the Ninth Symphony. I have not heard the monophonic pressing, but it too received (in connection with the bass response) the same criticism from Deryck Cooke when it was released in

Europe about four years ago. At its current low price, this would appear therefore to be a serviceable bargain, not an absolute find in respect to sound, and the same may be said of the performance.

Keilberth propels the first movement and the *Scherzo* with no great urgency, and is plainly more intrigued by their sound than their sense. He does procure some very lovely playing in the *Adagio*, the least eloquent passages tending to be the very ones in which Walter's musicians shone. For some reason, he makes the section extending from cue B to cue D in the *Scherzo Trio* conform to that extending from H to K, by inserting the counterpoints for flute and bassoons (after B), and for trumpet (after C), which Bruckner reserved for the later passage.

He adopts the same impossibly slow tempo for this *Trio* as Walter does, and the only conceivable compensation, that provided by the microscopic illumination of its inner workings, is not granted to the same degree by the recording. (The opening *ostinato* bars cannot even be heard at average volume.) The main *Scherzo* is a little faster—about half way between Walter and Horenstein, but still rather dogged. The side break is sensibly placed before the *Trio* instead of after (as in Epic and Vox) or in the middle (Columbia). I'm still looking forward to a Ninth with the finale fragment included, and one movement per side. Unreasonable? —J.D.

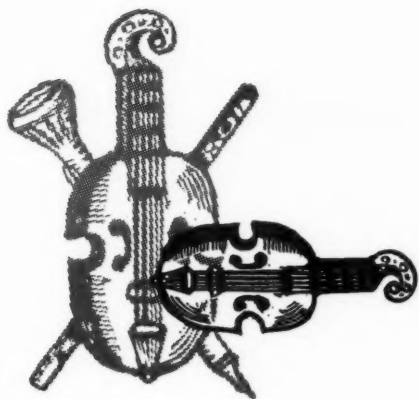
## *Contemporary has done us a wonderful service*

**BUSONI:** *Toccata; Sonatina No. 1; Sonatina No. 6; Six Elegies*; Edward Steuermann (piano). Contemporary 6501, \$4.98, or Stereo S-8501, \$5.98.

§MANY times I have heard musicians rejoice or sneer at the mention of this name. My reply is that one cannot condemn (or for that matter, even praise) without the reality of examining, considering, and then once being enlightened—knowing. To most, Ferruccio Busoni means, in the greatest majority of instances, the Bach transcriber. The man who strove for the most reproducible type of super-

classicism is little known. The composer to whom postromantic considerations were abhorrent is a vague name in the encyclopedias. It was in 1922 that Busoni issued his manifesto of the creed of neoclassicism—that all works should show perfect skill and be “elevated to the rank of classic art.” Perfection was to be the dogma, not in terms of breaking down old forms to build the new, but to reach ever deeper into the intellectual concepts of the classical masters. The music recorded here gives proof of this theorem. The forms employed are one illustration. The style





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remains classical no matter the species of romantic title that may be employed (or romantic harmony which from time to time intrudes). Especially fascinating is the enormous interest in reconsideration of another composer's ideas. In the sixth sonatina Busoni uses melodies from "*Carmen*" (the subtitle of the piece is "*Carmen Fantasy*"). But no tittle-tattle grace notes run up and down the keyboard, if you please! In place of Lisztian analysis we have a structure of new line, of new detail, of an afterpiece of musical drama after the fact. It is somewhat like looking through a projector with unwillingness to accept, and then to suggest a substitute. It is a startling idea and makes one understand what is wrong with the usual paraphrase, which is generally all sweetness instead of spice and vinegar. This same aspect is interleaved in the pages of the fifth of the set of *Elegies*, wherein "*Green-sleeves*" becomes divested of its haunting hearty beauty and turns into unearthly expressiveness. There is much to learn of Busoni's art in this collection. There is a precept that one understands after listening to his work. This: classic music is built from contrasts, but these are chiseled from one piece. Organic totality is Busoni's work; it is not severe, nor is it enigmatic. It is truly a new classicism, wherein line writing becomes amplified without over-looking formalism and logic. Contemporary Records has done us a wonderful service in this recording. —A.C.

●  
**BUXTEHUDE:** *Cantatas*, "*Erbarm dich mein, O Herre Gott*"; "*Fürwahr! Er trug unsere Krankheit*"; "*Befiehl dem Engel, das er Komm*"; Margot Guillaume (soprano), Ernst Max Lühr (bass), Marie-Luise Bechert (organ) directing the Hamburg Musikrunde Chorus and the Instrumental Ensemble of the Bach Anniversary. Lyrichord LL-96, \$4.98.  
*Fürwahr* ..... Archive ARC-3108

▲ANOTHER of Lyrichord's reissues from the old Vox catalogue, where this record first appeared as PL-7430. It is a pleasing program. The performances are uniformly good, with particular honors going to Guillaume, who has since been doing well in releases for Deutsche Grammophon

on its Archive label. In the first two works the proper ensemble of one instrument to each part is employed. The recording sound is still quite bright and full. One of the works, *Fürwahr! Er trug unsere Krankheit* has since appeared in another version as part of an Archive Buxtehude disc. There the performance and sound are more delicate in texture, and a full section of boy sopranos is used for the soprano solo. There is ample ground for choice between the two recordings; for my own part, I find the robust and forthright quality of the older version a bit more satisfying. Lyrichord has done well to revive this particular release for us. Let us hope that its companion programs from the same source, originally released as Vox PL-7330 and PL-7620, will follow in short order.  
—J.W.B.

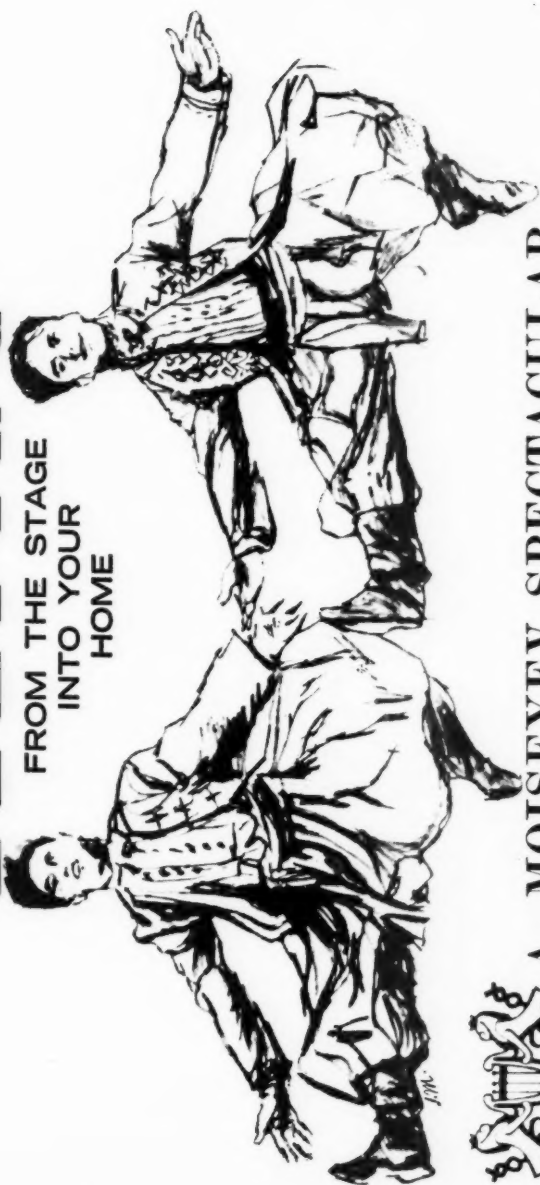
●  
**BYRD:** *Music for Voice and Viols: Prelude and Fantasia à 5; La Virginella; My Sweet Little Darling; Fantasia à 3; What Pleasure Have Great Princes; Though Amaryllis Dance in Green; In Nomine à 5; Blessed is He That Feels the Lord; O Lord, How Long Wilt Thou Forget; Fantasia à 6; The Man is Blest That God Doth Fear; Why Do I Use My Paper, Ink and Pen;* Russell Oberlin (countertenor), The In Nomine Players, directed by Denis Stevens. Experiences Anonymous EA-37, \$4.98.

▲PROMISED for more than six months past, this release finally has appeared under the aegis of the new parent company, Lyrichord (to whom we are indebted for enabling the appearance also of another long-announced release, EA-35, the French Ars Antiqua program). One of the selections in this new Byrd recording, the pretty lullaby *My Sweet Little Darling*, appears in a program by Alfred Deller on a Bach Guild disc (BG-557) entitled "*William Byrd and His Age*". Otherwise, the present selection offers a very pleasing group of pieces which are not available elsewhere. Oberlin was in particularly good form when this recording was made. He sings beautifully and with great feeling. He is ably supported by the instrumentalists, who are also very effective themselves in the four splendid consort pieces. The only

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complaint might be that some of the vocal works are presented in truncated form, where there was ample space and justification for including more verses, if not all. The instruments sound unusually bright in tone. Oberlin seems a little more

distant from the microphone than was necessary, but in general the sound is excellent. Following the best traditions of the label, the full texts are included. An attractive release, worth investigating by all. —J.W.B.

## From LRM, another highly admirable project

HAVING achieved such noteworthy success with its brave Vivaldi series, the LRM has projected three additional ventures. One, another long-range one, is a series of the Symphonies of Haydn. A shorter one is a set of Bach's Brandenburg Concerti with reproductions of the composer's autograph scores included. The third, and of moderate scope (twelve records), is a complete presentation of the works of Corelli.

Not that the complete Corelli on records is something new. Actually this composer is the only one I can think of—with the slightly qualified exception of Anton Webern—whose entire authenticated output has been offered previously on records. The one fly in the ointment is that Vox's Op. 5 was not the Corelli original, but Geminiani's transcription of the set as concerti grossi—interesting and valuable,

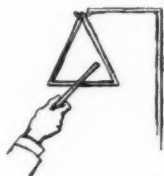
but not the genuine article. Nor were the other sets entirely without flaw. The chamber ensemble of the Musicorum Arcadia played well, but the rigor of their assignment seems to have induced a tone of weariness; and the recorded sound was rather thin and insipid. Besides, these sets are out of print. Likewise Eckertsen's reading of Op. 6, which was vigorous, consistently intelligent, and continuously satisfying; but his set was seriously handicapped by the inexplicable failure to use a harpsichord at all, thus crippling the continuo. Of the Vox sets, indispensable in their way regardless of shortcomings, only that of Op. 5 remains available; and the stereo version of that has at this writing gone only as far as the first of its three records. But there have also been other extended Corelli recordings, with the Op. 6 of course winning this further attention. Quadri's set, with the so-called "English Baroque Orchestra", is adequate without being overly distinguished. The recording by the Copenhagen Societas Musicae Chamber Orchestra offers both more effective performances and also the first major application of stereo sound to this cycle. Mention might also be made of two single-disc samplings of Op. 6, one by the Società Corelli for RCA Victor (LM-1776: Nos. 1, 2, 7, 8, and 9), and a better one by I Musici on the Epic label (LC-3264: Nos. 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10).

Judging from this initial volume the LRM's new project should supplant virtually all its predecessors, in terms of authenticity, sound, and, in most cases, quality of performance. A further and important advantage is the inclusion of the scores, which, as in the Vivaldi series, are bound into the sturdy double-sleeve album. The scores are taken from the old

**CORELLI: Complete Works, Vol. 1:** *Concerto grosso in D, Op. 6, No. 1*; Eduard Melkus, Walter Hintermeyer (violins), Gerhard Zatschek (cello), Christa Landon and Josef Nebois (harpsichords), Vienna Sinfonietta conducted by Max Goberman; *Trio Sonatas in G, Op. 4, No. 10, and D, Op. 4, No. 4*; Max Goberman, Michael Tree (violins), Jean Schneider (cello), Eugenia Earle (harpsichord); *Sonata in E minor, Op. 5, No. 8*; Sonya Monosoff (violin), Sterling Hunkins (cello), and Stoddard Lincoln (harpsichord). Library of Recorded Masterpieces, Mono or Stereo, \$8.50 (by subscription only).

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edition by Joseph Joachim published by Friederich Chrysander, originally as part of the *Denkmäler der Tonkunst* at the end of the last century. These texts are thus old but are still regarded as the basic and standard edition. Their inclusion obviously enhances the value of the series greatly.

Unfortunately, still groggy from wallowing in Vivaldi, the LRM has carried over its practice of haphazard programming. It is of course quite true that Corelli never intended his *opera* to be played and listened to all at once as integral units. But he did intend them to be *considered* together, as his selection of essays in the given form which he chose for survival. In view of the obvious reference value of this series it is regrettable that the respective *opera* cannot be maintained as units: for it is going to be rather troublesome to find a specific work in this twelve-volume hodgepodge when it is completed.

Otherwise, high praise is in order. For the Op. 6 Mr. Goberman has gone to Vienna and assembled a fine-sounding ensemble, and they have responded well to him. Two harpsichords have been employed, one for the continuo of the *concertino*, and the other for the continuo of the *ripieno*—a unique gesture to authenticity, in theory if not in practice. (One of the harpsichordists, by the way, is the wife of the great American Haydn scholar, H. C. Robbins Landon.) Happily, too, the sound has none of the dry or edgy characteristics which mar some of the Vivaldi ensemble work. With typical imagination the second violins have been placed on the opposite side of the firsts, instead of behind them, an essential move in view of their frequent opposition in the music. The opportunity to use the advantages of stereo for differentiation of placement between *concertino* and *ripieno* has still not been fully made use of, but at least the *concertino*—its members simply in the appropriate first-desk positions—stands out much better in the old standard location that it does in the Hansen recording.

With the Sonatas we are back in this country, with performers (and sound) familiar from the Vivaldi recordings. In

the two Op. 4 works the placement of the two violins one in each channel (though with the parts switching with the reversed roles of the two violinists, who remain in the same positions) is of the utmost help in clarifying the composer's writing. Miss Monosoff's embellishments on the Op. 5, No. 8 are in good taste and are, if anything, rather conservative. The keyboard realizations are generally not so imaginative as in some of the Vivaldi recordings, but they are adequate. The sound in the chamber works is a bit edgy, but eminently clear.

Without doubt, this first volume promises well for this significant and highly admirable project. —J.W.B.

●  
**COUPERIN:** *Leçons des Ténèbres*: Alfred Deller (counter-tenor), Wilfred Brown (tenor), Desmond Dupré (viola da gamba), Harry Gabb (organ). Bach Guild BG-613, \$4.98, or Stereo BGS-5039, \$5.98.

⑧TENEBRAE is the name given to the service of the last three days of Holy Week. During the course of the ceremony the lights are gradually extinguished until the service ends in darkness. Couperin's *Leçons des Ténèbres* were composed between 1713 and 1715, probably for use by a convent. Originally nine in number, the first three *Leçons* are all that have survived the centuries, the others unfortunately having been lost. Couperin's ability is at its most impressive in these *Leçons*, reaching a tremendous emotional intensity in the third one for two tenors. Always available in at least one recorded version, the *Leçons* has turned up on records in both choral and solo versions. The only other presently available one is on Westminster XWN-18581 and features Hugues Cuénod and Gino Sinimberghi. Spoiled principally by the blatant Sinimberghi in the third *Leçon*, it remains quite acceptable in other respects, though its use of a harpsichord would seem less accurate than the organ on the new Bach Guild release. In most other respects Deller seems to me the most successful in handling this difficult music. His voice has a sexless quality that is highly appropriate and his skill at phrasing and ornamentation are highly useful here.

# What's New?

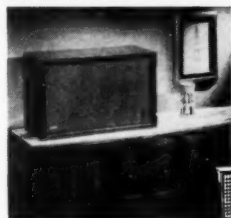
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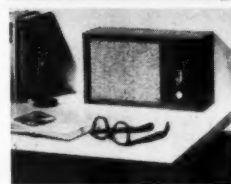


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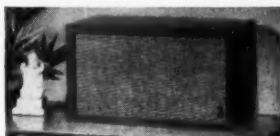


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Less appropriate is his treatment of the vocalises as virtuoso passages; remembering the devotional aspects of the material, less freedom in coloratura embellishment would have been more suitable. The sound is satisfactory, but an unnecessary amount of surface noise militates against complete approval of the pressing. —R.J.

•  
**DVOŘÁK:** *Ten Legends, Op. 59;* Czech Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Karel Sejna. Supraphon LPV-311, \$5.98 (Artia import).

▲THESE extraordinarily fragrant works represent a midway point between the Slavonic Dances and more substantial symphonic creations. Like the Dances, they were originally composed for four hands and later orchestrated; I can vouch

for the fact that in their original form they make for enchanting good fun. Some of the harmonic turns are incredible, especially Dvořák's special earmark in the use of third-related chords as pure color. In this respect be prepared to be haunted for days by the turns in the coda of No. 10. To proclaim the set a series of masterpieces would be to gild the lily; all that needs be said is that there is very little music as purely beguiling as the best of these simple works. Sejna's performances are exactly right, mirroring the childlike naïveté of the music and never pushy. The drab old Columbia readings by Thomas Scherman can now be set aside; the Czech recorded sound, although venerable, supersedes the former issue by miles. —A.R.

## *A birthday tribute to Gershon Ephros*

**EPHROS:** *Uvashofor Godol; Ovos; Ashre; Kiddush; Lo Omus; Piano Variations; Piano Suite; Introduction, Andante and Fugue;* Cantors Robert H. Segal; Arthur Wolfson; Saul Meisels; Moshe Ganchoff; Choirs of Temple Bnai Jeshurun, New York; Temple on the Heights, Cleveland; Lucy Brown (piano); Kohon String Quartet. Tikva Records T-70, \$4.98.

▲THIS album celebrates the seventieth birthday of Gershon Ephros, who is best known for his prodigious research in synagogue music, which culminated, after forty years of labor, in his five-volume "Cantorial Anthology". Ephros is not only a Hebraic musicologist, but also a composer in his own right (he studied with Joseph Achron). The separation of the two is somewhat distinct, but there is more than distant relationship between the sacred and the secular in his output. Consciously or otherwise, Ephros borrows the inflections of Hebraic musical lore and this artistic fusion results in reliable music. When he endeavors to steer clear of this heritage he tends to become immersed in academic waters, mainly polyphonically colored. This is apparent in the well-made variations (based on a theme by Achron)

which is powered, at its close, with fugally outlined detail. Another facet in this brotherhood of aesthetics is the modality that becomes transliterated into the secular productions. In such cases Ephros' music has potent force, and holds the attention. An example: the sweeping chorale (movement three) of the piano suite. Again: the first two-thirds of the quartet. The other side of the coin is the polyphony mentioned before. There is little characteristic in the standard fugue and this nullifies the full attainment of both the piano suite and the quartet, being used at the terminal point. It is a case of expressive realization (his harmonic side) as contrasted to the pedantic dogma of his polyphonic side. By far the most important part of this testimonial release are the five pieces that illustrate music in Ephros' anthology. These include two that have the especially marked distinctions of Hebraicism; *Ashre*, which is extremely moving and *Lo Omus*, illustrative of the embroidered effect of cantillation. (This piece is a setting made by another present-day composer, Reuven Kosakoff; the recitative is by Ephros.) The cantorial pieces are beautifully sung and styled by four different "chazzanim". Though the



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choirs are listed on the liner notes, the organists are not. The liner copy, incidentally, was not proofread: "anthal-

ogy" (*sic*), and even the record company's name is alternately "Tikva", and "Tikvah". —A.C.

## A remarkably satisfying experience

By ALAN RICH

**F**ERENC ERKEL (1810-1893) is generally regarded as the founder of Hungarian national opera, and seems to be the only composer that country produced during the 19th century willing to stay at home. For these reasons he is still regarded as a national hero, and "*Bánk Bán*" is performed yearly on the Ides of March, a national holiday. So much, and little more, can be gleaned from the reference books about a composer who, it now suddenly appears, was a man of no small ability.

The plot of this work, drawn from a popular historical drama by József Katona, is the familiar mixture of patriotic fervor and romantic hokum that can be found in early Verdi, and the resemblance does not stop there. Musically as well, there are many passages that bring to mind

moments in "*Don Carlo*", and a snatch or two from the last act of "*Rigoletto*". Erkel revels in the huge sound and the violent contrast, and he also knows a thing or two about using the orchestra as an important dramatic and unifying device. He will break off a crucial scene and then set the orchestra about the task of continuing the mood through ensuing action with snatches of remembrance motives and other cogent commentary. He also knows a great deal about building impressive vocal-choral ensembles that stretch on and on and get better as they go; one such scene in the first act is a ringer for the Act II finale of "*Aida*"—although the latter work was still ten years unborn when, in 1861, "*Bánk Bán*" saw the light of day.

All this Erkel accomplishes with a strong and original melodic sense. The "nationalistic" flavor stems from the use of certain rhythmic snaps and gapped scales that tell us little more about authentic Hungarian music than do the Rhapsodies of Liszt; the sound of cimbalom also emerges from the orchestral texture from time to time. On the whole, however, the musical interest transcends national boundaries. The sum total is of an exciting and strongly-conceived work in the Verdian stream, with an incidental Hungarian flavor, masterfully scored for voices

**ERKEL: "Bánk Bán";** József Joviczky (*Bánk Bán*); Júlia Osváth (Melinda); László Külkei (Otto); Rózsi Delly (Queen Gertrudis); László Jámor (King Endre); János Fodor (Petur); György Melis (Biberach); György Radnai (Tiborc); Chorus of the Budapest State Opera and Budapest Philharmonic Society conducted by Vilmos Komor. Qualiton set HLPX-150/2, six sides, \$17.94. (Artia import).



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and orchestra. The major weakness is an occasional predilection to milk the sentimental moments for all they are worth; a long scene for Bánk and Melinda, around which a halo is woven by—of all things—a solo viola d'amore, tends toward the gooey. But this, too, is a Verdian weakness, as anyone who knows the famous trio from "*I Lombardi*", which this scene resembles, can testify.

The performance may be presumed to be authentic, and sounds on the whole extremely well. Joviczky is a dramatic tenor who sounds somewhat past his prime in some rather strained fortissimos. Külkei, on the other hand, is a splendid lyric artist, with some of the melting quality I remember from men like Chabay in their prime. Radnai's marvelously rich baritone ennobles his one long scene. The women are splendid, especially Mme. Osváth, a nimble but enormously moving coloratura soprano. The orchestra and chorus produce prodigies of sound when the occasion demands it. The recording, which dates from 1956, is more creamy than brilliant, but it will do. It all makes for an authentic document, and a remarkably satisfying experience.

**GLINKA:** "*Ivan Susanin*" ("*A Life For the Tsar*"): Excerpts; V. Firsova (soprano), I. Petrov (tenor), A. Ilyin (bass), Bolshoi Theatre Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by Vassily Nebolsin. MK-1554 (Artia Import), \$5.98.

(Complete)

Markevitch. . . . .Capitol-EMI GCR-7163

▲ THIS release has nothing to do with an older and complete Russian recording, of

78 r.p.m. vintage, by Bolshoi forces under Melik-Pashaiev, which appeared in this country for a while on the Vanguard label (VRS-6010/1/2) and is now deleted. Whether or not the present record derives from a newer complete recording is not indicated. Certainly for the time being those who want the complete opera are well enough served by the Markevitch set. But for those content with extracts this program is nicely selected. Included are the Overture, the opening Chorus of Peasants and Antonida's Cavatina and Rondo from Act I, the Wedding Chorus, with Antonida's Romanza, from Act III, Susanin's famous Act IV monologue, and the Entr'acte and closing chorus of the Epilogue. Of the soloists Firsova (when will the Soviets learn to give us a first name instead of merely an initial?) is most in the spotlight. She has a fairly neat, precise voice, with admirably accurate pitch; a certain lackluster and metallic quality may be an engineer's fault, and may account for some of the hollowness and lack of color on the part of Ilyin. Petrov's appearance in the Peasants' Chorus is too trivial to display him fairly, but he seems to have a very pleasing voice. The chorus is often terribly ragged in its attacks, but has that wonderful mass and conviction that seems to be a national heritage. The orchestral playing sounds adequate, but it is certainly not flattered by the deadish recorded sound, more tolerable only in degree than some previous examples of Russian sonics. But the surfaces of this Russian-made record are admirably noise-free. The notes include English translations. —J.W.B.



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**The Man I Love; Love Walked In; Love Is Here To Stay; Nice Work If You Can Get It; Clap Your Hands; But Not For Me; I Got Rhythm; Someone To Watch Over Me; others.**

Mono: B 20096



## *An abridged but otherwise welcome 'Julius Caesar'*

*A Guest Review*

By MARTIN BERNHEIMER

THIS IS perhaps the most gratifying by-product of the revival of interest in "*Julius Caesar*" currently sweeping Germany and Austria—a movement that even got as far as American concert performances. (The Metropolitan has never mounted a Handel opera, so a complaint in that direction would seem to be wasted effort at this time.)

Deutsche Grammophon has brought together Vienna's current Cleopatra, Seefried, Fischer-Dieskau, who—to the best of my knowledge—has never sung Caesar on the stage but should, and the capable Karl Böhm, who seems fully aware of the *aufführungspraxis* problems involved.

Only one regrettable feature marks the release, and perhaps it is ungrateful to mention it. But with such likely participants available for so worthy a project, why must we be content with highlights? The excerpts are intelligently chosen; all of the protagonists' important arias, with recitatives, are included, and the final duet is done, too. Handel's extraordinary theatrical sense is appreciated fully, however, only when the arias—relatively static in themselves—can fall into dramatic context. That is impossible here.

Seefried has had a peculiar history among the remarkable crop of light sopranos that emerged from Vienna after the war. While most of her colleagues have graduated to the heavier repertory (Schwarzkopf now sings the Marschallin; Wilma Lipp has taken on "*Meistersinger*"; Della Casa is about to become a Salome; Jurinac has traded in Marzelline's dirndl

for Fidelio's trousers; and Gueden is forsaking Zerlina for Elvira), Seefried has steadfastly refused to wade musically over her head. Perhaps she was wise, for her voice has retained much of its sweetness and purity.

The pinched high tones that marred some of her recent public appearances are not in evidence here, and, except for a weakish trill and limited breath (both flaws relatively infrequent and unimportant), she is in her element. The Seefried Cleopatra is far more kittenish and childlike than that of Della Casa, who recorded the five arias for London and frequently sings the part at the Munich Festival. In her own way, Seefried is thoroughly convincing, unmannered, and her Egyptian queen is a sprightly characterization to boot. She has an edge over the stately Della Casa, too, in that she sings in the original Italian, whereas the latter adopted German translations.

Caesar was intended for a castrato, and, naturally, offers a major casting problem today. Fischer-Dieskau's noble style, bolstered by an astounding coloratura technique, makes him an inspired choice for the part. And since the bulk of the score (transposed an octave) lies comfortably in his middle register, the results are commanding. Any doubters should listen just to his witty yet superbly controlled performance of the marvelous hunting aria, *Va tacito e nascosto*, which, by the way, would be worth the price of the record alone for the virtuoso performance of the horn obbligato.

Böhm not only supplies sensible, spirited accompaniments, but also sees to it that ornaments are realized consistently and with reasonable authenticity. His Handel is not of the touch-me-not variety, nor, on the other hand, is it so lively that it smacks more of romanticism than classicism. The Berlin Radio Symphony responds appreciatively, and the sound—minus stereo tricks—is fine.

**HANDEL:** "*Julius Caesar*" (excerpts); Irmgard Seefried, soprano (Cleopatra), Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone (Caesar), Radio Symphony Orchestra of Berlin conducted by Karl Böhm; Wolfgang Meyer (cembalo). Deutsche Grammophon Stereo SLPM-138637, \$6.98.

**HANDEL:** *Concerto for Orchestra No. 25, "The Water Music";* Brno State Philharmonic, conducted by Janos Ferencsik. Parliament PLP-146, \$1.98.

Dart, Philomusica.....Oiseau-Lyre SOL-60010  
Van Beinum, Concertgebouw.....Epic BC-1016  
Lehmann, Berlin Phil.....Archive ARC-3010  
Neel, Boyd Neel Orch.....London CM-9116

▲WHILE this release may not put its predecessors out of the running, it is a creditable and very pleasing presentation in all respects. The playing is expert and precise, the interpretation spirited and intelligent, and the sound of the winds is particularly fine. The Chrysander edition is used, of course, and somewhere off in the dim distance is a harpsichord. The sound is not up to current standards of the legend "high fidelity" on the jacket. But if its limitations include some distortion in the final grooves, it is far from poor. And the brave engineers have broken precedent by giving us a spacing groove between every movement, a handy if bewildering feature. Even the jacket notes are of good quality. And at this generous price such a release, like so many on this label, is a distinctly attractive bargain.

—J.W.B.

**HANDEL:** *Concertos for Organ and Orchestra, Op. 4, Nos. 1, 2, and 4, Op. 7, No. 1;* Ralph Downes (organ), with The London Chamber Orchestra conducted by Anthony Bernard. Music Guild Stereo S-3. (Available by subscription only.)

⑧DOWNES' gentle instinct for Handel is most persuasive. He has long been associated with the forward-to-baroque movement in England, and his playing has beauty as well as authority, although his shutting the swell folds occasionally for contrast in lieu of changing manuals will cause dismay in some circles. British baroque organ design is milder than the Continental, embracing clarity and low wind pressures but eschewing severely individualistic stops or any harshness of ensemble. The instrument used here is not named (!) but is evidently one of the better English organs of this type—rather flutey and not hootey. Its wind supply is insufficient to support repeated notes, full organ, without the shakes: this

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bizarre effect occurs only once and could possibly have been avoided. It is most unfortunate that so musical a production, in which Mr. Bernard must share the credit for his distinguished accompaniments, was not granted better sound. Side one mis-tracks at times, and the over-all decibility is more "orthophonic" than stereophonic.

—J.B.L.

**HANDEL:** *Great Tenor Arias*—"Xerxes"—*Frondi tenere; Ombra mai fu; "Acis and Galatea"*—*Love in her eyes; "Ptolemy"*—*Silent worship; "Jephtha"*—*Deeper and deeper still; Waft her, angels; "Messiah"*—*Comfort ye, my people; Every valley; "Semele"*—*Where'er you walk; "Judas Maccabaeus"*—*How vain is man; Sound an alarm; Kenneth McKellar (tenor); Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. London Stereo OS-25234, \$5.98.*

§SINCE Richard Lewis, William Herbert, and their fine peers will unfortunately not be with us forever, it is good to know that successors may be in the offing. The present record is obviously an effort to groom one. McKellar's voice seems to be a small one, even with the boost of recording, but it is a clear one, with a consistent and pleasing color. With a good voice are joined also competent musicianship, and—a vital quality, perhaps encouraged by his folk-singing experience—clear diction. What he appears still to lack is a sense of dramatic thrust and meaning that is needed to remove this music from the realm of pretty crooning to vital art. Boult's accompaniments are barely adequate, and the conductor gives none of the important impetus that might be provided the young singer. Nor are the accompaniments fair to Handel. Not only is a harpsichord not used, but also the Mozart scoring is employed in the "*Acis*" excerpt, and the touched-up scorings for the "*Jephtha*" and the last "*Judas*" extracts are examples of the irresponsible editorial accretions that ought by now to be banished from sensible performances. Also, the "*Ptolemy*" aria should have been sung in the original Italian, and not in the fatuous English text used here. Despite the

aforementioned handicaps, however, McKellar shows great promise and he is a Handel singer to watch. He is due to participate in a new London *Messiah* this year. We may therefore look forward to hearing more, and doubtless better, from this gifted artist.

—J.W.B.

**HAYDN:** *Symphony No. 98 in B flat; Symphony No. 101 in D ("The Clock"); Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Otto Klemperer. Angel Stereo S-35872, \$5.98.*

§SINCE Klemperer is an acknowledged master of the German school (he is particularly well known for his Beethoven and Brahms interpretations), the power of this recording comes as no surprise. Here he offers two of Haydn's strongest symphonies with dignity and authority. Although the music is stated with something of a Beethovenian accent, it is enhanced rather than overpowered by it. Too often the picture of Haydn as pink-cheeked and paternal spills over into performances, which do no justice to his genius. Klemperer's more serious approach is therefore appreciated. If this disc lacks anything, it is a little of the inimitable Haydn sense of humor. Be that as it may, these are still highly worthy and recommended performances. The recorded sound is clear and well spaced.

—D.K.

**U. KAY:** *Sinfonia in E; BINKERD:* *Symphony No. 2; Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by George Barati. Composers Recordings CRI-139, \$4.98.*

▲THE contrast in these two composers carries through in their approach to the matter of symphonic form. Ulysses Kay's work is in the four-section frame; Gordon Binkerd's is but a pair of movements. The *Sinfonia* alternates slow and fast movements; the third part is highlighted by a sensitive, deeply felt, and yet tuneful middle portion (a *grazioso*), which is a gem of a conception. Kay is a professional composer. The adjective distinguishes the not-too-many from the majority who have not the willingness (nor the ability) to produce music for varied, almost severely contrasted needs. It also signifies

the man who is not ashamed of being himself, or, as is the case with this Sinfonia, of displaying a rich palette, perhaps a romantically significant one. And in the year when this work was composed (1950), as now, to be creatively natural was considered somewhat unnatural. Kay stays away from "isms", "systems". Praise be. He writes convincing music; he can also knock out a beautiful piece of counterpoint that registers. His Sinfonia is one of the better pieces CRI has recorded.

Counterpoint is the word for the first half of Binkerd's symphony—a work that reverses the tempo plan, this composition ends in slow tempo. In the second movement lyrical impulses prevail, as do the resources of chamber situations applied to the full orchestra. The development processes are constant and only small reminders of thematic material are interjected. The German *durchkomponiert* does not strictly fit, but it serves well enough to describe the ever-flowing resources (nicely astringent in proper amount) of this work. Binkerd has individual freshness. Together these pieces are a credit to American music. —A.C.

•  
**LEHÁR:** Highlights from "Schön Ist die Welt"; **MILLÖCKER:** Highlights from "Die Dubarry"; Soloists and Chorus of Radio Vienna and the "Vienna Grand Operetta Orchestra" conducted by Kurt Richter. Epic LC-3758, \$4.98, or Stereo BC-1117, \$5.98.

⑧FANS of "grand operetta" will have a field day with these selections. Lehár's "Schön Ist die Welt" stems from 1934—a long way from his 1905 "Merry Widow" days. There is no point in recounting the story of the Herzer-Löhner-Willner-Bodansky libretto; it could only happen to those poor operetta characters, and compared to it the story of, say, "Il Trovatore", has Shakespearean depth. Still, there are some tunes which are at least from Lehár's second-best harvest—notably the waltz *Ich bin verliebt*—and the tango *Rio de Janeiro* and the rumba *Schön sind lachende Frau'n* are also quite fetching. They are all sung in typical operetta tradition: e.g., by Lotte Rysanek with a sturdy soprano

August, 1961

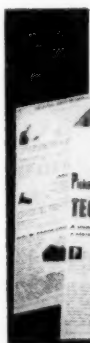


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which tends to get rather shrill when reaching soprano altitude; by Christine Spierenburg with pure, if unsubtle operetta dash; and by Horst Heinrich Braun, a typical lightweight operetta tenor. They all perform in a straightforward and competent manner but only Margit Opawski and Leo Heppe, in the Duet *Herzogin Marie*, acquire some atmosphere and characterization which makes this the high point of the recording and one which almost approaches the Gingold-Chevalier *I remember it well* from "Gigi". "Die Dubarry", produced for the first time in 1879, is again not quite top-drawer Millöcker. Still, the two songs *Ich schenk' mein Herz nur einem Mann* and *So ist sie, die Dubarry*—both sung on this record by Spierenburg—have for a long time, and rightly, been staples of the operetta repertoire. Kurt Richter conducts both works well enough, the stereo is good and does not overdo "stage movement", and altogether there really is nothing wrong with this record except that in our LP age such stars as Gueden, Schwarzkopf, Streich, Gedda, and Kunz and such conductors as Krauss, Karajan and Ackermann have made it a rather difficult field for average operetta folk.

—G.B.

•  
**MOZART:** *Divertimento in D Major, K. 251*; *Divertimento in F Major, K. 247*; The English Chamber Orchestra conducted by Colin Davis. London/Editions de L'Oiseau-Lyre Stereo SOL-60029, \$5.98.

(K. 251)  
Münchinger, Stuttgart..... London CS-6169  
Casals, Perigian..... Columbia ML-4566  
⑤THE better-known of these two works, K. 251, is a most elusive little piece. The mood is generally one of the most refined gaiety, French in the extreme and very charming. Münchinger, I think, concentrated so much on its charm that the recording became precious. Casals was better able to display its virtues, although the performance was by no means the last word in Mozartian verve. Both performances benefited from superb oboe playing (Münchinger's soloist anonymous, Marcel Tabuteau on the Casals) and recordings which highlighted its bright tone. Davis seems better able to project the

varied attractions of the work than either of his predecessors. The performance is vital and bubbling throughout, particularly successful in the wonderful *Rondo* fifth movement, which Münchinger leads in leaden fashion. My only complaint about the whole is the rather subdued sound of the oboe, more a fault of placement and engineering than playing, for the anonymous instrumentalist seems to be very good. Perhaps Münchinger is simply more successful with the oboe because his orchestra is smaller; but Davis' group is certainly not heavyweight.

K. 247 is a perfect gem and unduly neglected. Here, again, Davis leads with plenty of spirit and his orchestra plays very well, although the sound of the strings is slightly drier than ideal for a complete projection of the music's warmth. This is quite apparent in the fourth movement, one of those delicious bittersweet songs which is the joy of every one of Mozart's divertimenti. I wish that this charming, and at times exquisitely beautiful, work, were still available as recorded by members of the Vienna Octet on ten-inch London LS-682, for to hear it as probably originally intended, with one instrument to a part rather than played by a small orchestra, conveys far more of the appropriate intimacy and lightness. Withal, however, Davis' version fills a gap in the catalogues and is most welcome.

—H.G.

•  
**MOZART:** *Mass in C minor, K. 427* ("The Great"); Maria Stader (soprano); Hertha Töpper (alto); Ernst Häfner (tenor); Ivan Sardi (bass); Chorus of St. Hedwig's Cathedral and Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ferenc Fricsay. Deutsche Grammophon Stereo SLP-138124, \$6.98.

Moralt, Vienna Symphony.....2-Epic SC-6009

⑤OUTRIGHT praise or condemnation of this splendidly engineered new release is impossible, for the performance is many things—good and bad. The opening measures of the *Kyrie* are glossed over, at a fast tempo, with little feeling for the profound sadness of the music. But with the entry of the excellent chorus, the section begins to take on a somewhat more

meaningful shape, although still far from the moving beauty of the Moralt. Stader's magnificently clear singing eventually manages to lift the *Kyrie* to a higher level than could be imagined from hearing its beginning. The entire *Gloria* is done with spirit and conviction, with the strong vocal quartet shining. The solo work is actually Stader's show throughout, as she is the only singer assigned any substantial work, even performing the *Laudamus Te*, which is normally assigned to the lower female voice. With the *Credo*, Fricsay again seems little involved. His loosely shaped approach is far less effective in conveying the strength and passion of the works than it is under the tighter hand of Moralt. Stich-Randall's disembodied sounds in the *Et incarnatus est* on Epic may seem affected to some listeners, but I find them completely beautiful and preferable to Stader's cool, lovely and slightly less agile work. Fricsay's *Sanctus* is strong and effective, but I wish that he had managed to put greater emotional stress into the sublime orchestral measures preceding the vocal entry in the *Benedictus*. As a totality, this release has much to recommend it. The music represents all the work on the Mass that Mozart completed, as well as H. C. Robbins-Landon's reconstruction of the *Credo* and *Et incarnatus*, and may therefore be considered more authentic than the Epic, which comprises the same sections but utilizes a "complete" mass score invented largely by Bernhard Paumgartner through the clever but perhaps specious device of borrowing portions of other Mozart masses. Still I prefer Epic's more dramatic and deeply moving performance. —H.G.

**ORFF:** *Carmina Burana*; Janice Harsanyi (soprano); Rudolph Petrak (tenor); Harve Presnell (baritone); Philadelphia Orchestra, Rutgers University Choir conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-5498, \$4.98, or Stereo MS-6163, \$5.98.

⑧ THE composer's reputation stems from this work and, in the vernacular, this scenic oratorio made him a compositional "character." He chose twenty-five poems

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from thirteenth-century texts and in each case these represent a revolt against the conventional prose of the times in which they were written. The texts go into many matters, including eating and drinking, and especially the matter of love in the fullest physical sense. In sum, a musical Rabelaisian tale. There is no cerebral speculation in this music; Orff drives home his arguments in the most direct fashion. Any criticism of redundancy is canceled by his plan, which is based on redundancy. Repetition is the prime factor; it is employed for the melodies, the rhythms, the words. The arch-primitivistic language of the composer is thoroughly in keeping with the musical plot; it may be termed banal by those who desire a more sophisticated system, but it is no more artificial than any other composition "system". *Carmina* is

vivid simplicity at its most possible artistic exploitation. It gives a sense of occasion, even though it is by a contemporary voice speaking in terms of a millenium past. Ormandy's is the fifth entry in the catalogue and it certainly must be considered prime. Orff's music is music for a conductor—period. This is a work that demands a real point of directorial authority. And, one of conductorial incisiveness by understanding that Orff's score is a musical orgy of fact and fancy plus huge, vital, almost-deadly strokes. Though Ormandy is more restrained than Stokowski was in his also excellent performance with the Houston groups (Capitol PAR/SPAR-8470), he brings just as forceful consideration to the work. All the soloists are good, and the Choir deserves special mention. —A.C.

## A Poulenc masterpiece

By HERBERT GLASS

**W**ITHOUT further introduction, let me say that I feel Poulenc's *Gloria* to be that composer's masterpiece (to date) and one of the supreme choral-liturgical works of this century. The *Gloria* was commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation in 1960 and given its world première this year (January 20) in Boston by the B.S.O. under Munch, with Adele Addison as soloist. Its subsequent performance in New York by the same forces earned it an award from the Music Critics Circle. Everything about this music is fresh, inspired, magnificent—a culmination of Poulenc's work of the past decade with such splendid compositions as the *Stabat Mater* and "Dialogues des Carmélites". The tremendous energy of the opening *Gloria in excelsis Deo* and the *Domine Fili unigenite* is awesome. *Lauda-*

*mus te* is reminiscent of the dash of "Les Mamelles de Tirésias", although that charming work is not in a class with the *Gloria* by the remotest stretch of the imagination. *Domine Deus*, the later *Domine Deus*, *Agnus Dei* and the concluding measures of *Qui sedes* I can only call some of the most sublime melodic inspirations of our age, ethereal and supremely moving in their simple beauty.

The performance is all that the music merits. Carteri sings her mysterious high-lying passages with unaffected, touching loveliness and ease, with a rich tone which never becomes weighty. The chorus and orchestra under the wonderfully vital Prêtre are superb. I find this music so completely and utterly grand that I am hard put to find words to describe my reactions to the reader. Its manner is operatic and dramatic in much the same way as Verdi's Requiem is, but of course there is no musical resemblance. It is, like the Requiem, music for the senses as well as the heart. It is cast in a less daring and difficult harmonic idiom than most of today's music, and yet always gives the impression of being completely of our time. Having listened to the *Gloria* more

**POULENC:** *Gloria in G; Concerto in G minor for Organ, Strings, and Timpani*; Rosanna Carteri (soprano) in *Gloria*; Maurice Duruflé (organ) in *Concerto*; French National Radio-Television Chorus (in *Gloria*) and (in both) Orchestra conducted by Georges Prêtre. Angel Stereo S-35953, \$5.98.

often in a few weeks than I would normally hear a work in a few years, I can safely state that its beauty and power increase with every hearing, while beauties unnoticed during the first hearings constantly emerge.

This disc should qualify for anyone's "best of the year" list and I strongly urge the listener in search of great, unhackneyed music, thrillingly performed in brilliant stereo sound, to add the *Gloria* to his collection.

The Organ Concerto is impressive, more so in this version than in the long-familiar Biggs-Burgin one on Columbia ML-4329, since this new release features the kind of bright, clear sound necessary to display the ingenious manner in which Poulenc has balanced the huge organ tone with that of the small orchestra. It is particularly striking here, for the fine soloist plays the huge, snarling, very French organ of St. Etienne du Mont, Paris. His playing does not always have the clarity of articulation of Biggs, but this may be caused by the instrument, and it is more than compensated for by the heightened sense of drama in this interpretation. Frankly, some of the music reminds me of the old business of the mad monk of Gothic novel and neo-Gothic movie fame, sitting up in the organ loft on a stormy midnight. Nevertheless, it is interesting, and I consider it a pleasing bonus.

•  
**RACHMANINOFF:** *Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18*; Leonard Pennario (piano); Los Angeles Philharmonic conducted by Erich Leinsdorf. Capitol Stereo SP-8549, \$5.98.

⑧WITH thirty recordings of the thrice-familiar Rachmaninoff C minor listed in the May issue of *Schwann* one might well question the need for another. Still, Capitol's latest release has much to recommend it. For one thing it is a superb recording, alive with presence. For another, while it may not be the most exciting version extant, it is musically one of the most searching and satisfying. Tonally, Pennario makes the most of the magnificent Steinway at his disposal, and Leinsdorf and the orchestra give him sympathetic support. Deftly skirting the

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borderline of sentimentality in the *Adagio sostenuto*, they make this movement in particular hauntingly moving. Incidentally, an older mono version of the Rachmaninoff C minor Concerto by Mr. Penñario and the St. Louis Symphony under Vladimir Golshmann's direction is still

available on Capitol P-8302 at \$4.98. Not having a copy of the earlier one at hand I am not able to compare them. Next to Rachmaninoff's own recording with the Philadelphia Orchestra, however, of the five in my collection I find the present one altogether the most preferable. —R.K.

## Reger by Serkin and Ormandy—Bravo!

HOW to explain the lack of interest in this composer who wrote over one thousand works, whose chamber music production alone is close to a total of forty compositions? A look at any of his scores, a hearing of any Reger music, are proof sufficient that this is no composer who wrote educational and teaching pieces by the yard. Only the very opposite type of present-day composer, writing commercial potboilers under the very false heading of "educational" music, matches this gigantic outpouring. How to explain this lack? How to explain the almost bare recording lists? The answer lies in the fact that one must be prepared to accept Reger's tenets in regard to form, harmony, counterpoint, and color. These are concerned exclusively with the absolutes of classical logic, romantic semifussiness, and a seeking for more and more individuality of line. It is music of compact but far from thin texture. It is music that is designed by linear measurement and gummy density, not in any way to be contrasted to the lightness of an impressionist or even the solidity of a Beethoven. Dislike for Reger is mainly centered around the word "dry". The preoccupation with counterpoint—of which technique Reger was a master second to none (as great in the sheer handling of contrapuntal materials as Bach himself)—is still another reason for the appellation. To be "dry" is to be exhaustive. Most

listeners want counterpoint interlarded, not served plain on the musical platter. It is important to attempt an understanding of Max Reger. There is little for the sweet tooth in his music; it is a kind of musical chewing tobacco that takes a long time before it is finished. One must say justifiably that the technique does get the better of the composer. His perception is, at times, smaller than the music he manufactures. Thus, proportions tend to enlarge; the ego of technique takes over the level-headed creator. Everything he touched turned into counterpoint, extra lines, a technical wizardry of the pen, and demanding all of an instrumentalist.

Still, as will be heard in this Concerto, Reger loved Beethoven and Brahms, and was possessed of a desire to follow them, with almost strict avoidance of any extra-curricular sensations. This concerto is no glassy mold in which a solo pianist disports; the work is an organism that is ratified by concrete musical conditions, and to hell with showmanship; it is all music; the listening attitude must be parallel to late Beethoven.

What Reger needs more than just the understanding of auditors is the comprehension of performers. Rediscovery of composers is part of all musical history. When one hears a good performance of a Reger work, as in this instance, played with affection, careful respect and regard, one's ears open. His music is too validly honest to be remembered as mere pedagogics in counterpoint. Serkin and Ormandy with the Philadelphia Orchestra have asserted and proven the free poetry of Reger's music. It deserves full repertorial standing and hearing. Bravo! —A.C.

**REGER:** *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in F minor, Op. 114*; Rudolf Serkin (piano) with the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-5635, \$4.98, or Stereo MS-6235, \$5.98.





**SCHUBERT:** *Octet in F Major, Op. 166;*

The Fine Arts Quartet, members of The New York Woodwind Quartet, and Harold Siegel (double-bass). Concert-Disc Stereo CS-220, \$4.98.

Vienna Octet..... London CS-6051

⑧ CONCERT-DISC, which makes a specialty of issuing more and better performances of chamber music than other companies, has outdone even such fine achievements of its past as the Bartók Quartets and the Schubert "Trout" Quintet with this new release. This version of the Octet is far superior to such impressive competition as that offered by London, Angel, and Westminster. The Fine Arts, members of the New York group (David

Glazer, clarinet; Arthur Weisberg, bassoon; John Barrows, horn) and Siegel are ideal interpreters of the music. The Octet can seem interminable in the hands of lesser artists. Here it seems almost too brief, for there is such impeccable ensemble, warmth, and good humor in their interpretation that it sounds completely fresh. Happily, too, there is none of that preciousness which occasionally afflicts the Vienna Octet version, and the sound is at least as bright and balanced as London's. Every one of the players deserves the highest praise, but I would particularly like to single out the nimble work of clarinetist Glazer. This release is recommended on all counts. —H.G.

**SCHUBERT:** *Symphony No. 4 in C minor ("Tragic");* Czech Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Kurt Redel.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Coriolan Overture, Op. 62; Ruins of Athens Overture, Op. 113; Prometheus Overture, Op. 43;* Prague Symphony Orchestra conducted, respectively, by Kurt Redel, Vaclav Smetacek, and Alois Klima. Supraphon SUA-10115, \$5.98 (Artia import).

▲ WHY the Schubert symphony has fared so badly in the record catalogues (including the pre-LP years) escapes me; it shouldn't be that hard a nut to crack. Redel's approach to this work is conceived along classic lines, as might be expected from his marvelously-shaped Bach performances on Westminster. On the whole it is a fine conception, certainly preferable to the overstressed Klemperer-Vox reading that has just been reissued, or to the rather neutral performances by Maazel and Van Beinum now available. Still, I miss a measure of eloquence in the slow movement, and of fury in that finale that so remarkably anticipates the *appassionato* style of Mendelssohn. I hope that London can someday be persuaded to set Peter Maag to work on this symphony; it should be great. Redel's *Coriolan* is similarly understated and, by and large, a failure. The opening is fine, but the heroine stalks stiffly where she should glide. The other overtures, less substantial musically, receive reasonably sympathetic treatment. —A.R.



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# Szell's Schumann

By DEANNE KLEIN

**S**CHUMANN is reputed to have been most uncomfortable writing for any instrument other than the piano. In his orchestral works he has been accused of blundering use of instruments, loose construction, lack of contrast, and awkward orchestration (he doubles instruments on the same melody to fill out a score, a technique which merely produces a neutral effect). Yet they are imbued with such great tenderness and honesty of expression that, if he is guilty of the charges lodged against him, his four symphonies are undoubtedly the most exquisite, imaginative and successful "failures" in all of the orchestral literature.

This collection of Schumann works by Szell is surprisingly only the third attempt by a record company to offer all of the symphonies in one package. The previous ones, largely unsuccessful, were by Boult and Kletzki. Szell's album is the first to do justice to the lyric beauty and romantic fervor of the music.

Unlike the bulk of romantic literature, which flows easily from the baton, Schumann's works require the complete understanding and co-operation of the conductor. Szell has realized this and given freely of himself. He has discovered and treads lightly on the fine line between romanticism and classicism which is the heartstring of the music. On the one hand he maintains the structure and builds the form, and on the other he allows a definite freedom to the romantic line. Performed otherwise, the sprawling works would lose their cohesiveness, and the fragile melodies would sound fragmentary. Szell has also edited parts and arranged the placement of his orchestra judiciously. Altogether, his efforts have rewarded us with performances

that are at no time less than compelling.

The Symphony No. 1, *Manfred* Overture, and Piano Concerto were released on singles some time ago, and heartily applauded then. The Symphony No. 1 was written the year after Schumann's marriage to Clara Wieck. Inspired by spring, it is a work of youth and love. Originally the movements were titled "*Frühlingsbeginn*" (Beginning of Spring), "*Abend*" (Evening), "*Fröhe Gespielen*" (Cheerful Companion), and "*Völler Frühling*" (Full Spring), but the composer removed these so as not to limit the work to a program. Szell captures the exuberance of the score while maintaining the admirable clarity that has become the hallmark of his disciplined orchestra. Krips' version is, to me, still the most powerful, but in a package such as this Szell's more than suffices. The latter's interpretation of the *Manfred* Overture, however, is in a class by itself in its perfection of imagery. The Piano Concerto, too, is a remarkable performance, but Fleisher is second to the unforgettable Lipatti, who still reigns supreme.

Of the three new recordings, the Symphony No. 2 is, for me, the most gratifying. The work is so large and elusive that one rarely hears a performance that sustains interest all the way. In Szell's hands, however, it goes perfectly, for the conductor is a master of musical logic. He knows exactly where to tighten phrases, and how to build meticulously. The magnificent Symphony No. 3 and the compact Symphony No. 4 are treated in a similarly superior manner.

Throughout the album one is aware that he is present at that rarest of musical events—when a performer is so sympathetic to a composer that he truly captures his thoughts and feelings. It is not something that can be described, but it can be felt. As for the sound, the clarity and sumptuousness of the mono discs for once equal the stereo counterparts. This album is in all respects one of the most important ever issued by Epic.

**SCHUMANN:** *Four Symphonies; Manfred Overture; Piano Concerto in A minor; Leon Fleisher (piano);* Cleveland Orchestra conducted by George Szell. Epic set SC-6039, eight sides, \$19.98, or Stereo BSC-110, \$23.98.

# One of the important concerti of the century

**SHOSTAKOVICH:** *Concerto for Cello in E flat, Op. 107; Symphony No. 1 in F, Op. 10*; Mstislav Rostropovich (cello); Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-5452, \$4.98, or Stereo MS-6124, \$5.98.

(SOMETIMES a reviewer who hears much music is accused of being blasé, callous, bored, a negative voice. But generally a reviewer is uninterested only when stock tools are used by a composer. These have no value; patent tricks do not constitute real, significant art.

All of this as a preamble to the fact that Dmitri Shostakovich has written one of the important concerti of the century. We all have been conscious that Shostakovich has often emphasized rigid rhythm, satirical or sentimental melodicism, and has had a fondness for brass-bandish, over-measured clamor. He has, at times, been quite ignorant of the dangers of banal and grotesque utterances. The Cello Concerto persuasively cancels any such criticism; it is a superb work of intelligibility that expresses passion and has passionate conviction. It is a concerto for the cello, utilizing its entire gamut, permitting it to sing with heat and gentility, and framed with irresistible orchestrational complexities. And, this music which is of quiet bravado (but no hysteria) is a solo piece without a single cliché. It consists of a concentrated initial, lyric movement, proceeds to the slow portion with a chilling conclusion that utilizes cello harmonics and the thin sonority of the celesta to make its point. The very long cadenza which follows—no refurbished sequential nonsense or demagogic virtuosity is employed—is an actual development of the musical material, and the composition is completed with a brighter, dance-like movement. Again, trite, swaggering static rhythmic music is avoided; the idea is not sheer joy, there is some fractious friction in these measures. Then the Concerto returns to the beginning (built from a four-sound motive) and drives to its conclusion.

I reserve for the last a statement that

Rostropovich is one of the most magnificent cellists of all time. Every hearing of this man's playing emphasizes this conviction. His projection of Shostakovich's mighty piece is a highlight of the catalogues. Ormandy's support is proof of his tremendous growth as a conductor, furthered by the rendition of the First Symphony. This has true quality, especially in regard to the choice of tempi. The tendency to overpress the scherzo (though it must travel fast) is watched, and the music skims along but does not blend into muddy specks because of excessive tempo. The soloists within the Orchestra have an opportunity to display their talents and it is indeed a joy to hear the marvelous sounds of their concertmaster, first clarinet, solo oboe, and horn in the many passages for these instruments. —A.C.

•  
(GILBERT and) SULLIVAN for Orchestra: Eric Johnson and his Orchestra. Westminster XWN-18952, \$4.98.

▲WHY anyone would prefer his Gilbert and Sullivan in a "string-of-tunes" arrangement rather than in full operatic dress, I will not here attempt to understand. The six suites comprising this disc are made up of themes from "*The Mikado*", "*The Gondoliers*", "*The Yeomen of the Guard*", "*H.M.S. Pinafore*", "*Patience*", and "*The Pirates of Penzance*". As each melody appears, quietly and gently, the orchestra seems to be saying, "Remember this tune. . . and this one. . . ?" The performances are, for the most part, rather lacking in humor, and at times the stuffiness becomes stifling. Very good sound, however. —D.H.M.

•  
TCHAIKOVSKY: *The Nutcracker—Excerpts*; Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Eugen Mravinsky. MK-1545, \$4.98 (Artia import).

▲THIS issue, presented on its cover as the "*Nutcracker Suite*", is actually the concluding portion of Act 1 beginning with the Enchantment Scene following

the party, and the *Waltz of the Flowers*, *Pas de deux*, and Finale from Act 2. It sounds ancient, perhaps being derived from 78s—and miserable 78s at that. What one does hear sounds like a performance of routine quality afflicted by some *ritardandos* that are guaranteed to startle anyone familiar with the score. Pass this one by. —C.J.L.

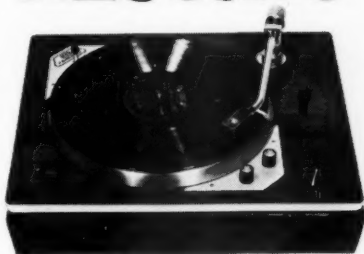
**TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64*; Czech Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Lovro von Matacic. Parliament Stereo PLP-149, \$2.98.

⑤**SPIRITED** and well-paced, if not inspired. Matacic keeps things moving, and never resorts to the sentimental even at the most tempting moments. He concentrates, rather, on orchestral color through the use of broad contrasts. Since the recorded sound is of good quality, this becomes an attractive feature. Considering the modest price, this disc is particularly recommended as a filler for the collection that may be lacking in old standards. —D.K.

**VIOTTI:** *Quartet in B flat*; *Quartet in G*; Baker String Quartet. Society for Forgotten Music (Contemporary Records) SFM-1006, \$4.98, or Stereo S-2006, \$5.95.

⑧**TRULY** an exhilarating and delightful release. So often an organization means well but does not do well. The Society for Forgotten Music has matched its will with two marvelous deeds by this pair of quartets. Viotti? Yes, the composer of violin concerti that every student has had to master (and which, unfortunately, have disappeared from the concert scene) wrote string quartets. According to the records he composed more than two dozen. From these the second and third of a set of three quartet "concertants" are here performed. Any composer who worked during the period of Haydn-Mozart-Beethoven had more than two strikes against him. Such unfortunate historical placement belongs to this composer. While he was surpassed by these great masters, there is fertility in his music aside from productivity. One is compensated by grace, charm, and a type of grandmotherly humor. While the music

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does not attain anything new—the mark of creative genius—there is spontaneity and vivacity. The forms are similar, save for the exchange of place of the minuets with the slow movements; in the B flat the *minuetto* is the third movement, in the G major it is the second. These minuets are marvels of construction, of cogent thematic cast, and contain a flavorsome twist by alternation of mode. For these portions, alone, of music that has classical poetry in every one of its measures, the release is worthy of the highest praise. But there is more: the bubbling and yet serious tone of the *allegros*. The performances are marvelous frames for the music and the sound is beautifully engineered. —A.C.

# Vocal Miscellany, Including Reissues

*Of three styles and three eras* By MAX DE SCHAUENSEE

THE appearance of these records poses some delightful contrasts in tone and style, as we listen to three singers who were outstanding examples of different vocal eras: Mattia Battistini, the flamboyant, arrogant *grand seigneur* of 19th-century opera; Tito Schipa, who was most at home in the classic style, and Jussi Bjöerling, who so recently shone in the romantic repertory.

Battistini (1856-1928) was born some twenty years after the première of "Lucia". Memories of the singing of

Rubini, Mario, and Lablache must have been yet vivid during the days of Battistini's youth and their influence still strong in the opera houses of that epoch.

It is utter nonsense to approach Battistini from the rigid standards of our day and to dismiss his virtuosity with an indulgent or complacent smile. What makes sense is the realization that through study of this supreme vocalist and his technical necromancy we gain invaluable, first-hand knowledge of a particular era and its tastes. The most famous baritone

## Opera Recital: "Il Barbiere di Siviglia"

—*Largo al factotum* (Rossini); "The Demon"—*No, non plorar* (Rubinstein); "Eugene Onegin"—*Se dell'immen* (Tchaikovsky); "Un Ballo in Maschera"—*Eri tu* (Verdi); "La Favorita"—*A tanto amor* (Verdi); "Ernani"—*Vieni meco* (with Emilia Corsi, soprano, and orchestra—Verdi); "La Traviata"—*Di Provenza il mar* (Verdi); "I Puritani"—*Ah! per sempre. . . Bel sogno beato* (Bellini); "La Favorita"—*Vien, Leonora. . . De' nemici tuoi* (Donizetti); "Don Carlo"—*Per me giunto è il dì supremo. . . Io morrò* (Verdi); "La Forza del Destino"—*Urna fatale. . . Egli è salvo!*; Mattia Battistini (baritone) with various pianists and orchestras. Angel COLH-116, \$5.98.

## Opera and Song Recital: *Sento nel core*;

*Le Violette*; *Son tutta duolo* (A. Scarlatti); "La Sonnambula"—*Prendi, l'anel ti dono* (Bellini); "L'Elisir d'Amore"—*Una furtiva lagrima* (Donizetti); "Don Pasquale"—*Com'è gentil*; *Tornami a dir che m'ami* (Donizetti); "Orfeo ed Euridice"—*Che farò* (Gluck); "Werther"—*Ah! non mi ridestar* (Mas-

senet); "Manon"—*Ah! dispar, vision* (Massenet); *O del mio amato ben* (Donaudy); "L'Amico Fritz"—*Suzel, buon dì. . . Tutto lace* (Mascagni); Tito Schipa (tenor) with various assisting artists and orchestras. Angel COLH-117, \$5.98.

## The Beloved Bjöerling, Vol. I, Opera

Arias 1936-1948: "Carmen"—*La fleur que tu m'avais jetée* (Bizet); "L'Elisir d'Amore"—*Una furtiva lagrima* (Donizetti); "L'Africana"—*Mi batte il cor. . . O paradiso* (Meyerbeer); "Manon"—*Instant charmant. . . En fermant les yeux*; *Je suis seul. . . Ah, fuyez, douce image* (Massenet); "Manon Lescaut"—*Donna non vidi mai!* (Puccini); "Cavalleria Rusticana"—*O Lola, bianca come fior* (Mascagni); "La Bohème"—*Che gelida manina* (Puccini); "L'Arlesiana"—*È la solita storia* (Cilea); "La Gioconda"—*Cielo e mar* (Ponchielli); "Rigoletto"—*Questa o quella* (Verdi); "Pagliacci"—*Vesti la giubba* (Leoncavallo); "Turandot"—*Nessun dorma* (Puccini); Jussi Bjöerling (tenor); Stockholm Concert Association Orchestra conducted by Nils Grevillius. Capitol G-7239, \$4.98.

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of that era seems to be actually present in the room as we listen (yes, stereophiles to the contrary!).

Tito Schipa (born 1888), with his un-failing rhythmic sense, is the singer who would best suit the metronomic approach likely to be the norm of our immediate future. Born with a voice of modest, even inferior, range and resonance, Schipa specialized in the Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti repertoire and became the most disciplined Italian tenor of his day. There was nothing extravagant, spontaneous, or capable of great expansion about this classic singer. He evolved a peculiarly personal voice and style, over which he exercised the control of a martinet.

Even the Nordic Jussi Bjoerling (1911-1960), whose international career began (1936) when Schipa's was on the wane, indulged in moments of effusion and a tendency to relish high notes which, kept within reasonable bounds, proved effective for the *verismo* school. Bjoerling was one of many tenors who had listened long and carefully to the records of Enrico Caruso; Schipa paid little or no attention to the golden surges from the fabulous Neapolitan's throat. Unlike many votaries at the shrine of Caruso, Bjoerling's Northern discretion and his fine musicianship kept him from the exaggerations idolatry is likely to engender. He has recently been called the "Swedish Caruso"; the "Swedish Gigli" would be a far more accurate estimate of his caliber.

Bjoerling's voice recorded beautifully, as did the voices of Battistini and Schipa.

Angel's presentation of Battistini lists selections from his 1903 Warsaw series to one made in 1924, when the baritone was 68. To be noted are his perfect "Favorita" excerpts; the exuberant florid passages in "Puritani" and "Barbiere"; and the altering of Verdi's melodic line in an imposing *Di Provenza il mar*. A flawless example of *bel canto*, of ornamentation riding freely on the breath, may be found in the "Ernani" excerpt. This voice was a splendid instrument—rangy, ringing, challenging. Some sounds were white and open, willfully so, but they were characteristic of the day.

Schipa's far more contained singing

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finds its happiest outlet in a wonderfully artistic and restrained *Una furtiva lagrima*; in three perfectly vocalized Scarlatti songs; in duets from Bellini and Donizetti with Toti Dal Monte, and in a carefully composed *Che farò senza Euridice?* Angel's reproduction for Battistini and Schipa merits the highest praise. Rodolfo Celletti has provided some extraordinary notes on Schipa's art, while Desmond Shawe-Taylor busies himself with the "gaslight era" glories of Battistini's talents.

Bjoerling's record is the first of three to be devoted to the art of the lamented tenor. It offers arias from the standard repertoire—Puccini, Ponchielli, Mascagni, Leoncavallo, Massenet, Bizet, and Meyerbeer—made between 1936 and 1948. The material is less interesting, but it serves to preserve the lovely tones and responsible attitude of one of the most admired singers of the immediate past. The notes by Harold Schonberg are affectionate.

**18th-Century Arias:** "*Orfeo ed Euridice*"—*Che farò senza Euridice*; *Che puro ciel* (Gluck); "*Medea*"—*Medea, o Medea. . . Solo un pianto* (Cherubini); "*Alceste*"—*Divinités du Styx* (Gluck); "*La Serva Padrona*"—*Stizzosa mio stizzosa* (Pergolesi); "*Paride ed Elena*"—*O del mio dolce ardor* (Gluck); "*Giulio Cesare*"—*Piangero la sorte mia* (Handel); "*Nina, Pazza per Amore*"—*Il mio ben quando verrà* (Paisiello); Teresa Berganza (mezzo-soprano) with Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden, conducted by Alexander Gibson. London OS-25225, \$5.98.

⑧BERGANZA has one of the really lovely voices of our day, so lovely, indeed, that it has a way of disarming criticism. It is a Spanish voice without the characteristic hard, brash quality, and it is as steady as a die. It is also a flexible voice, so that she can sing Rossini's florid melodies with the best of them. But the present program is something different, calculated to give an idea of the breadth of Berganza's accomplishments and capacities. I confess I was a little disappointed at first, as her *Che farò*, for all its tonal loveliness, is not exciting or very touching. The placid *Che puro*



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ciel is better, for here it is sheer tone that counts. But the "Medea" aria comes to life in a way one does not expect. This is incomparably the finest performance I have heard of the selection; it has the grand line and the exalted grief that can make such music great. But *Divinités du Styx* is too fast, and consequently it does not have the big line. And though the vocal quality is beautiful throughout, there is some trouble in the reproduction toward the end. The "Sera Padrona" number is light and altogether convincing. *O del mio dolce ardor*, one of the purest of melodies, is not done according to my convictions, yet somehow I cannot find too much fault with it. The interpretation is very free; were the voice less beautiful and expressive I would certainly object. As it is I am won over. But the finest of all is *Piangéro*, sung with style and splendid musicality. Finally, the air from "Nina" is delightful; I heard nothing as intriguing as this when I recently played the recording of the opera. Unquestionably Miss Berganza will grow in this repertory; as of now there is much to admire in her singing of it. —P.L.M.

**Golden Jubilee Concert, Town Hall, 7 November 1947:** *Mi parto* (Bottegari);

*Non lo dirò col labbro* (Handel); *Maledetto sia l'aspetto* (Monteverdi); *Sussurrate intorno a Clori* (Pasquini); "Nozze di Figaro"—*Aprite un po' quegli occhi* (Mozart); "Damnation de Faust"—*Song of the Flea*; *Aria of the Roses*; *Serenade of the Gnomes* (Berlioz); *Non nascondere il segreto* (Alfano); *Serenata "Canti di Strapaese"* (Tocchi); *Bergerette* (Recli); *C'era una volta* (Bizzelli); *Nel giardino* (Santoliquido); *Dodici!* (Filastrocca); "Traviata"—*Di Provenza* (Verdi); *Ninna; Dolce madonna; Marietta; Serenata gelata*; Giuseppe de Luca (baritone) with piano. ASCO A-124, \$3.98.

▲ HERE is one of de Luca's recitals given after his return to this country in the post-war days. It was recorded on the spot, complete with applause, even a shouted request for an encore. It is a matter of history that the audiences that came to hear de Luca in those days were attracted partly by sentimental associations with one of the long-time favorites of the Metro-

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politan, and one of its greatest artists. The surprise was that so much of de Luca's voice was still left, that he could satisfy still as well as charm with his vocal art and personality. There is a great lesson for any young singer in this recording, weak as it is. Naturally the voice is not evenly reproduced throughout, and the sound of the piano is quite unsteady. But this is de Luca, and those who were there that night will see him again as they listen. Those who may hear the artist for the first time are urged to follow this recording with others made in his prime. There is more here than many singers ever have to offer, but it is by no means the whole story of de Luca.

—P.L.M.

**A Mighty Fortress:** *A Mighty Fortress; How Firm a Foundation; Behold the Great Redeemer Die; Onward Christian Soldiers; More Holiness Give Me; The Lord Is My Shepherd; O God, Our Help in Ages Past; Come, Come Ye Saints; I Know That My Redeemer Lives; Though in the Outward Church; Father in Heaven; Abide with Me; 'Tis Eventide; Come Follow Me; God of Our Fathers; Nearer My God to Thee; Rock of Ages; Lead Kindly Light; Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah; Ye Simple Souls Who Stray; The Morning Breaks—the Shadows Flee; Come, Thou Glorious Day of Promise; All Creatures of Our God and King; Mormon Tabernacle Choir* directed by Richard P. Condie; Alexander Schreiner and Frank Asper, organists. Columbia ML-5497, \$4.98, or Stereo MS-6162, \$5.98.

⑤EVER clear enunciation with a choir of 375 voices is an accomplishment to be envied by the average choir of 25, and it is this quality plus a straight, untricked-out approach that has endeared it to millions of American radio listeners since 1929. As

usual, many of the hymns are accompanied so lightly as to sound almost a *cappella*, which puts the following statement about the organ from the notes firmly into the Useless Higher Mathematics Dept.: "This instrument has 11,000 pipes and 198 stops and couplers—which means that the organist playing it is faced with a choice of sound combinations numbering 36 thousand vigintillian (that runs to 66 zeros)." I trust that this formidable fact will not unduly influence the sale of this well-conceived, well-recorded collection.

—J.B.L.

**LEONCAVALLO:** "Pagliacci"—Prologo; **VERDI:** "Traviata"—*Di Provenza il mar;* **BIZET:** "Pêcheurs de Perles"—*Il Nembo si calmò;* **VERDI:** "Rigoletto"—*Pari siamo;* "Ballo in Maschera"—*Eri tu?;* **ROSSINI:** "Barbiere di Siviglia"—*Largo al factotum;* **GOUNOD:** "Faust"—*Dio possente;* **GIORDANO:** "Andrea Chenier"—*Nemico della patria;* **THOMAS:** "Hamlet"—*Brindisi;* **VERDI:** "Otello"—*Credo;* Manuel Ausensi (baritone) with an orchestra conducted by R. Lamote de Grignon. London Stereo OS-25117, \$5.95.

⑤AUSENSI has been a brightly shining star in many zarzuela recordings. He has frequently shown himself the possessor of a sympathetic and virile baritone voice and a good musical style. It is only natural that as his career develops he should leave his native Spain and broaden his repertoire. This is his second recorded recital of operatic arias in Italian. For the most part it is a very conventional one, challenging memories of all the famous baritones of recent times. It would be pleasant to note that in an aria or two Mr. Ausensi sets a new standard, but this is hardly the case. I would say his best work is in the declamatory monologue from "Andrea Chenier". He is less happy in the "Traviata" because here this kind of dramatizing is out of place. Surprisingly, the "Barber of Seville" is on the heavy side, while the "Ballo in Maschera" is rapid and deliberate. The accompanying orchestra is thin in sound.

—P.L.M.

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# SOUND IDEAS

*An Equipment Review*

By LARRY ZIDE

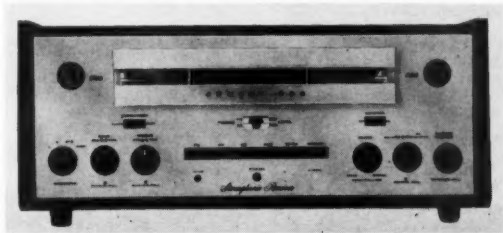
**B**EFORE proceeding with the regular reviews I would like briefly to comment on the recent FCC decision authorizing a system of stereophonic broadcasting via single FM stations. This system, the GE-Zenith multiplexing system, has come in for much comment, both pro and con, in the trade press. As far as this column is concerned the FCC decision on this system, rather than the competing methods of multiplexing, was the correct one for both the listener to high-fidelity broadcastings and (considering their financial problems) the stations themselves. Many stations engage in an older form of multiplexing, providing background music to subscribers. Since many FM-only stations can barely break even with their regular operations, this so-called storecasting service becomes a vital source of revenue. The FCC-approved system allows the stations to con-

tinue this service *as well* as broadcasting stereophonically.

What this means to the listener at home is that by the time this is in print several manufacturers will have FM-stereo tuners and receivers available as complete units, as well as converters for existing sets. FM listeners can expect radio stations to begin transmissions in the immediate future. Listeners without multiplex equipment will continue to hear full-fidelity broadcasts with both channels combined so that nothing is lost, as with present AM-FM stereo transmissions.

I shall be happy, incidentally, to answer any mail queries that come in regarding multiplexing, as I do questions on other aspects of music reproduction. Pressures of various sorts force me to be rather slow at times in replying, but I do get around to each letter eventually. . .

## Crosby R-80 AM-FM Multiplex Receiver



**T**HE COMPLETE receiver is the answer for maximum value and versatility in minimum space. The receiver is an electronic center with pre-amp, tuners, and power amplifiers all on a single chassis. All that need be added for a system is a record player and speakers.

The Crosby R-80 is a good example of such a device (price, \$375; walnut enclosure, \$30). Every needed control is provided on the handsomely styled front panel. Most of the knobs pull out to

actuate filters, phase reversal, loudness and channel reverse. The knobs are operated in usual fashion for speaker or headphone selection, bass and treble, stereo blend to mono, balance and multiplex dimension, and volume. The row of push buttons on the panel selects the program source.

Behind the panel is what really counts. Two 40-watt amplifiers, separate AM and FM tuners, and tape and phono preamplifiers of high sensitivity are all here.

The FM tuner is exceptionally sensitive.

In my New York City residence the tuner was pulling in strong stations with no antenna attached at all, albeit with some noise. A length of wire attached to one of the antenna screws provided full limiting for all stations in the area. Sound was clean and smooth, equal to all but the very best tuners I have heard. AFC is always on, although it can be temporarily disabled for critical tuning. The AFC circuit made no audible difference on or off. (Poorly regulated AFC controls will adversely affect bass response.) Drift was audibly non-existent.

The AM tuner, while no match for FM, was of low distortion and quite capable of extracting most of the best AM transmissions. Noise was very low and frequency response, though limited to a high of about 5,000 cycles, was smooth.

The phono preamplifier has the function of raising the extremely small voltage developed by the modern phono cartridge to a level sufficient to drive the power amplifiers. Another function is to provide correct equalization to the signal coming off the record. The R-80 proved to be a

quite respectable performer here. Even the lowest-output cartridge should be sufficient to drive the unit to full output. Sensitivity for full output was measured at 2 mv (at 1 kc). Equalization was quite accurate to the RIAA curve within 1 db from 20 kc to 50 cycles. Below 50 cps equalization fell off rapidly. This is a characteristic of all but the finest preamplifiers. Noise, quite often a plague of preamps, is no problem. This is a very quiet unit.

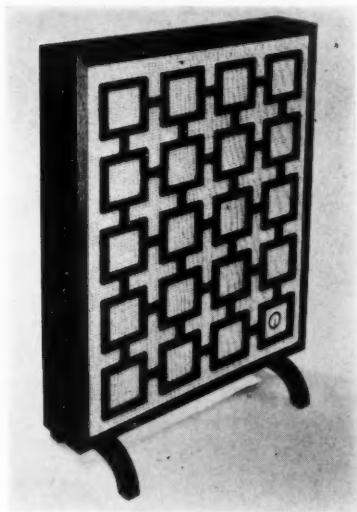
When I measured the amplifiers for power response I was surprised. I didn't expect it to test anywhere nearly as well as it did. The amplifier is rated at 40 watts per channel, music waveforms, or 35 watts RMS. Without going into the reasons, I prefer the RMS ratings and these are what I measured for. The R-80 amplifiers are capable of RMS clipping levels of over 40 watts at mid-frequencies and 35 watts or better from 50 cycles to 20 kc. Below 50 cycles the response fell rapidly. Since harmonic content rose rapidly below 30 cycles I did not make any visual measurements below this frequency. All in all this amplifier is quite conservatively rated, considering the often inflated figures published by some manufacturers. IM distortion measurements were not quite so pretty but still within acceptable limits. Square wave response was quite satisfactory for a unit of this price, although some high-frequency oscillation was observed.

The last two sentences may seem to be a damnation but in reality this unit tests no worse in these respects than others of this general type. These measurable effects are, to be sure, audible. But this is the difference between a unit selling for well under \$400 and a super system of over \$1,000.

The R-80 sounds good. It is a top performer at a reasonable price. Only the best speakers could reveal the slight deficiencies of the unit when compared against the best possible equipment. Thus the Crosby R-80 can be recommended as an exceptional value. Certainly there is no question in my mind that this set is well worth the price asked and that the consumer would do well with it.

<p><b>MUSICIANS</b></p> <p>★</p> <p><b>LIBRARIANS</b></p> <p>★</p> <p><b>CONCERT ARTISTS</b></p> <p>★</p> <p><b>CHORAL SINGERS</b></p> <p>★</p> <p><b>JAZZ ENTHUSIASTS</b></p> <p>★</p> <p><b>COLLEGE AND CONSERVATORY STUDENTS</b></p> <p>★</p> <p><b>TRAVELERS</b></p> <p>★</p> <p><b>BAND LEADERS</b></p> <p>★</p> <p><b>CONDUCTORS</b></p> <p>★</p> <p><b>MANAGERS</b></p>	<p><b>YOU SHOULD HAVE</b></p> <p><b>THE CALENDAR OF MUSIC ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED STATES</b></p> <p>10,243 music events listed <input type="checkbox"/> in 580 cities.</p> <p><i>Price \$2.00 postpaid</i></p> <hr/> <p><b>THE INTERNATIONAL MUSIC CALENDAR</b></p> <p>11,000 music events listed <input type="checkbox"/> in 100 foreign countries.</p> <p><i>Price \$2.00 postpaid</i></p> <hr/> <p><b>THE CALENDAR OF SUMMER MUSIC IN THE UNITED STATES</b></p> <p>3500 music events in 602 <input type="checkbox"/> cities.</p> <p><i>Price \$1.50 postpaid</i></p> <hr/> <p>Kindly Enclose Check With Order</p> <p><b>PRESIDENT'S MUSIC COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>734 Jackson Pl., Washington 6, D. C.</p>
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## Audax CA-70 Speaker System



**T**HIS speaker is the vanguard of what I expect will be a new trend in speaker design—the flat look. This unit from Audax, a division of Rek-O-Kut, measures only four inches deep. As the illustration shows, the Sonoteer has been tastefully styled in oiled walnut to complement modern décor. But style alone does not make a speaker, as many a manufacturer has ruefully discovered.

Cost is a factor that must be taken into consideration in evaluating speakers. At \$79.95 the Audax Sonoteer is an attractive buy for both sight and sound. I found my sample to have a “big” quality, undoubtedly caused by the front and back radiation of the enclosure. The Audax gives one a feeling of listening to a small box. I suspect that this quality would be diminished somewhat if the speaker were wall-hung rather than left free-standing as it was for these tests. Over-all sound was good—smooth and rather mellow. Extreme bass was simply not there, but what there was of the lower frequencies was full and rich. The midrange was not quite so smooth, but still satisfactory. The upper range was surprisingly good; indeed, I found that it was smooth and wide-range to somewhere above fifteen thousand.

The use of a frequency generator, a crude test at best, seemed to confirm these findings. The speaker fell off rapidly below 55 cycles with usable response to just below 50 cycles. Slight audible doubling was detected at these frequencies. Sweeping upward revealed smooth response over most of the range except for some slight buzzing in my sample at around 800 cycles. Response remained smooth right up to the top of 15,000. I expect that it actually extends beyond this frequency.

All in all the Sonoteer produces a pleasant sound. I found it an easy speaker to listen to, probably because of its non-strident top end. Its transients were a bit thick compared to a \$200 speaker, but better than most speakers in its price class. Considering it is a moderate-priced unit of uncommonly attractive appearance, with sound quite competitive with higher-priced speakers, Audax has done well with this, its first unit. The company promises more designs within the framework of this concept. I know that they will be interesting to see and hear. In any case, for \$80 or so the Sonoteer is one of only a few speakers in its class that have some legitimate claim to being categorized as “high-fidelity”.



# Stereotape Reviews

Peter C. Pfunke / Robert Jones



**ARNOLD:** *Guitar Concerto, Op. 67*; **GIULIANI:** *Concerto for Guitar and Strings*; Julian Bream (guitar); Melos Ensemble. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, RCA Victor FTC-2049, \$8.95.

**T**BREAM'S superb artistry is very exciting. In the Giuliani the guitar playing is so limpidly expressive and flexible that the sound is almost harp-like. Both concertos make delightful listening; the first movement of the Arnold is particularly poignant and lovely. The stereo sound is marvelous, exceptionally rich and full in the bass end without being overly thick and heavy. Highly recommended. See also page 560 in the March, 1961, ARG.

—P.C.P.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Symphony No. 3 in E flat, Op. 55 ("Eroica"); Symphony No. 8 in F, Op. 93; "Fidelio" Overture, Op. 72; "Coriolan" Overture, Op. 62; "Prometheus" Overture, Op. 43*; L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande conducted by Ernest Ansermet. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, London LCK-80066, \$11.95.

**T**THOROUGHLY undistinguished performances. The sound is clean but dry and unimpressive. Those interested in a more detailed perusal of the musical inadequacies may consult D. H. M.'s review in the April issue.

—R.J.

**BRAHMS:** *Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68; Symphony No. 2 in D, Op. 73*; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Rafael Kubelik. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, London Twin-Pak LCK-80002, \$11.95.

**T**OF these two performances I much prefer that of the Second Symphony which,

although "cool and aloof", as noted in the February, 1959, ARG (page 385), is far more supple than this First Symphony. London's sound is on the grainy side, but acceptable. See also page 66 in the September, 1958, ARG.

—P.C.P.

**BRAHMS:** *Hungarian Dances No. 5 in G minor, No. 6 in D, No. 7 in A, No. 12 in D minor, No. 13 in D, No. 19 in B minor, No. 21 in E minor, No. 1 in G minor; DVOŘÁK:* *Slavonic Dances No. 1 in C, Op. 46; No. 3 in A flat, Op. 46; No. 8 in G minor, Op. 46; No. 2 in E minor, Op. 72; No. 1 in B, Op. 72*; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, London LCL-80069, \$7.95.

**T**THIS is superbly flexible playing. The performances are finesse and graceful exuberance throughout. London's marvelous stereo leaves nothing to be desired. Highly recommended. See also page 308 in the December, 1960, ARG.

—P.C.P.

**MOZART:** *"Le Nozze di Figaro"*; Lisa della Casa (Countess), Suzanne Danco (Cherubino), Hilde Gueden (Susanna), Alfred Poell (Count), Cesare Siepi (Figaro), Anny Felbermayer (Barbarina), Hilde Rössl-Majdan (Marcellina), Murray Dickie (Don Basilio), Hugo Meyer-Welling (Don Curzio), Fernando Corena (Doctor Bartolo), Harold Proglhof (Antonio); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and the Vienna State Opera Chorus conducted by Erich Kleiber. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape. London LOV-90008, \$25.95.

**T**THIS tape comes as a reaffirmation of the quality of London's "Figaro", recorded

some five years ago and still considerably ahead of all its successors both in quality of performance and of sound. Already acknowledged to be one of the finest performances ever captured by the microphones, it now emerges, thanks to the tape processing, as one of the finest sonic achievements of our time as well. This tape is unconditionally recommended to all concerned with music and the art of sound reproduction.

—R.J.

**PROKOFIEFF:** *Concerto No. 3 in C, Op. 26*; **MacDOWELL:** *Concerto No. 2 in D minor, Op. 23*; Van Cliburn (piano); Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Walter Hendl. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape. RCA Victor FTC-2060, \$14.95.

THE brilliant Prokofieff Concerto receives a dazzlingly athletic performance by Cliburn on this new RCA tape. The guiding musical intellect and the sheer vitality of his playing are impressive enough to place the performance at the top of the list of available recordings. The orchestral support is everything it should be and the sound is superb. The MacDowell, a big-scale, romantic, slightly Brahmsian work (it was written in 1884) is given a frankly exhibitionistic working-over that is extremely effective, though I suspect that a more restrained approach would have been more suitable. The tape processing is closer to perfection than anything I have heard so far.

—R.J.

**SCHUBERT:** *Symphony No. 8 in B minor ("Unfinished")*; **MOZART:** *Symphony No. 35 in D ("Haffner")*; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Carl Schuricht. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Richmond RCE-40006, \$4.95.

STYLISHLY straightforward and competent, though little more. The Richmond sound is similarly acceptable, but certainly not exciting.

—P.C.P.

**R. STRAUSS:** *Don Juan, Op. 20*; **DEBUSSY:** *La Mer*; Fritz Reiner conducting the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape. RCA Victor FTC-2057, \$8.95.

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finite as any conductor's interpretation of any composer today. He is in his element here and the results are spectacular. The *Don Juan* possesses a tautness and intensity, an elasticity of phrasing which have become the hallmark of Reiner. These qualities are also present in *La Mer*, where less tautness and more delicacy, perhaps, would be desirable; but if one can regard this sea as being a fairly rough one he will find the conception exciting. The sound is on a par with the performances; hiss is low, crosstalk inaudible. A thoroughly impressive achievement by everyone concerned. —R.J.

★  
**VAUGHAN WILLIAMS:** *Fantasia on "Greensleeves"; English Folk Song Suite; Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis;* Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Westminster, WRC-148, \$7.95.

ⓉTHE playing here is warm and richly-hued throughout. Westminster's stereo is excellent. —P.C.P.

★  
**Operatic Recital—MOZART:** "*Le Nozze di Figaro*"—*Porgi Amor, Dove Sono;* **CILÈA:** "*Adriana Lecouvreur*"—*Io Sono L'Umile Ancella, Poveri Fiori;* **REFICE:** "*Cecilia*"—*L'annuncio, La morte di Cecilia;* **CATALANI:** "*La Wally*"—*Ne mai dunque avro pace?* **MASCAGNI:** "*Ladoletta*"—*Flammen perdonami*"; Renata Tebaldi (soprano); Orchestra of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Rome, conducted by Alberto Erede. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, London LOL-90029, \$7.95.

ⓉIT is now many years (twelve, to be precise) since the first Tebaldi recording appeared. It is a sad fact that the two great sopranos of the recently ended decade, Tebaldi and Callas, burst upon us at the peak of their vocal forms and promptly began to deteriorate. It is also strange that their decline followed much the same course: increasing difficulty with high tessitura, loss of power, and shrinking range. Callas, with a much less impressive instrument to begin with, retained the flexibility that always astonished her audiences and developed her dramatic

powers even further. Tebaldi, on the other hand, became even less interesting as a dramatic artist and relied more and more on sheer vocal quality, causing one critic to comment snappishly on her "rather narcissistic style".

This tape, first released as a disc some two years ago, affords a sample of the best and the less-than-best Tebaldi. The Refice comes off best, the voice lovely and lyrical, abundant with sadness and resignation. The Mozart is an example of how an Italian soprano sings Mozart. The Rossini, long a test piece for legato singing, displays the singer's lack of a legato; the lovely long phrases in the opening become a string of "ha-ha-ha"s with the soprano busily aspiring for all she is worth. The sound is lush, but the soloist is so far from the mikes she sounds to be offstage. The tape processing is rather too rich in hiss and London has obstinately retained what must be the most unflattering cover portrait of an artist ever perpetrated. —R.J.

★  
**Rhapsodies—LISZT:** *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2;* **ENESCO:** *Rumanian Rhapsody No. 1;* **SMETANA:** *The Moldau;* **SMETANA:** "*The Bartered Bride*" *Overture;* RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, RCA Victor FTC-2058, \$8.95.

ⓉBRILLIANTLY played by the "RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra", conducted in the familiar Stokowski style, and stunningly recorded, this tape should be eagerly snapped up by all those in search of exciting stereo. The sound is enormous, an impression helped along by a generous amount of reverberation. The orchestral choirs are in pinpoint placement, while crosstalk and hiss were obviously barred by the demanding Mr. Stokowski and the RCA engineers. Lest all this seem to be but a vulgar feast of sonic plentitude, let it be understood that musical values have been well served. The scores are so spectacular in themselves that no one has felt the need to improve on them. The results are so sensational that no company should need to improve on them for years to come. —R.J.

# LETTER FROM ENGLAND

LONDON

ONE OF the more astonishing features of English musical life during May was the incredible vitality and inexhaustible musicality of Pierre Monteux. That Monteux is a great conductor is, of course, not news. It is, however, astounding that at 86 he continues to display a complete command of orchestras and scores. A performance of Debussy's *Jeux*, not the easiest work in the world to bring off, was quite masterly, Monteux's careful ear for balance producing the most ravishing orchestral textures and colour. Whether accompanying Lili Kraus in Beethoven's C minor Concerto, raising the roof with Pijper's Third Symphony, or tackling the first complete performance for some time in England of Berlioz' *Romeo and Juliet*, Monteux showed little lessening of his powers.

It was small wonder, then, that Decca and RCA took the opportunity of making further recordings of Monteux with the London Symphony Orchestra. Although it could hardly be said that Beethoven's Fifth and Seventh Symphonies were urgently in need of new recordings, Monteux certainly should leave us some examples of his Beethoven when many lesser conductors have done so. At one recording session I attended, it was amazing to witness Monteux's control of the orchestra in a fast and fiery reading of the Seventh Symphony's finale. But it was not fast enough for him. "This must be a bacchanale", he said, and three times the orchestra played the finale before getting it near to the tempo Monteux wanted. It is a sign of the affection in which the orchestra hold Monteux that they were playing with equal enthusiasm and precision at the end of the session as at the beginning.

•

Amidst a crowded month when opera premières seemed to be taking place at the rate of three a night, and such rarities as Rossini's *Otello*, Verdi's *"Il Battaglia*

*di Legnano"* (in modern dress and with Sten guns), and Rimsky-Korsakov's *"May Night"* were heard, major interest centered around Covent Garden's new *"Falstaff"*.

This was produced by the young Italian Franco Zeffirelli, who has won himself an enviable reputation for his realistic productions. His setting of *"Falstaff"* lacked nothing in solid background and opulence of dress, while the elaborately worked out movements ensured a continual interest on the stage and a lively sense of period. I cannot help feeling though that it was an error of judgment to have solid staircases to the right and left of the stage in the majority of scenes. These were particularly out of place in Mistress Ford's living room and above all in the final scene which, far from taking place in Windsor Forest, was apparently set in Mistress Ford's backyard. There was a lack of mystery here, and Zeffirelli's indulgence with lights, heads, fairies, imps, etc., turned the scene into one that more resembled a Witches' Sabbath.

Zeffirelli succeeded magnificently with the young lovers. Both Luigi Alva as Fenton and Mirella Freni as Nanetta were charming without being coy, and affectionate without being sickly. Mariella Angoletti made an attractive though perhaps rather tentative Mistress Ford, but she perhaps never recovered from an unfortunate first night. Regina Resnik's Quickly was the real star among the women. Her fruity tones gave added colour to her rich, ripe portrayal of Shakespeare's Bawd. John Shaw was a good Ford, singing with splendid assurance and Michael Langdon did more with Pistol than most basses think possible.

Geraint Evans has matured into the part of Falstaff and now has a complete grasp of the role. His voice, too, seems bigger, and it is certainly astonishing that a singer of his calibre has not been offered the recording opportunities given to lesser artists.

—MICHAEL MARCUS



# WORDS ONLY

## *Faust, Part One*

Paul Kresh will be back next month

A Guest Review  
By C. E. PHILLABAUM

THE RELEASE of a large portion of the Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft "Literary Archive" series in this country fills a major gap in the spoken-word catalogue. The efforts of Caedmon and other companies have built up a substantial body of English-language recordings, and there has been a fair amount of French material made available, but German literature has been sadly neglected. The DGG series, which began in 1954 with the present *Faust* recording, includes a splendid survey of classic and modern literature in performances by many of the finest German actors, and it is a very welcome addition to the American listings.

Certainly there is little question that the two parts of *Faust* rank as one of the major masterpieces of all Western literature. Although the extreme difficulty of satisfactorily translating Goethe's richly expressive yet incredibly compact language has kept the play from holding its rightful place on the stage outside of the German language area, it is *read* the world over, and its cosmic view of the human condition is a building-block of our literary tradition.

Few works in any language have had the benefit of so long a period of development. Goethe wrote his first version of the story in 1774-75 (the *Urfaust*, a copy of which was discovered in 1887), while *Part Two* was not finished until one year before the poet's death in 1832. Despite this span of nearly sixty years, however, and despite the tremendous scope of the work, a firm line runs through it from the original bet between God and Mephisto in *Part One* to the final defeat of Mephisto and "transfiguration" of Faust at the end of *Part Two*. The very factor

which in the earlier medieval sources of the play led to Faust's damnation, his "eternal striving", became for Goethe both the unifying thread of his tragedy and the means of his hero's salvation. Yet even in this view, Goethe was not one to settle for pat solutions. Even though Faust's striving was shown as the highest manifestation of his humanity, it was strongly suggested that the results of this striving were by no means always laudable. In *Part One* it led to the destruction of the innocent Margarete, and in *Part Two* it culminated in an immense land reclamation project which was to be built by slave labor and by the heartless destruction of anyone who might have stood in its way. This final irony does much to explain Goethe's application of the term "tragedy" to the play, and it makes the whole of *Part Two* unusually timely for this modern age. It is to be hoped that the next DGG literary release in this country will include the splendid Gründgens recording of this part which was released last year in Germany.

The present discs include only *Part One* of the play, the portion which is most familiar and which has lent itself most readily to stage production. It was probably inevitable that the first release in a series of recordings of German literature would be *Faust*, and it was probably equally inevitable that the recording would call on the talents of the great German actor-director, Gustav Gründgens, who is probably the foremost living interpreter of the role of Mephisto. Gründgens' association with this part dates back to 1919, when he first played it at the beginning of his career; he first staged the play himself in 1942, and has done so twice since, each time playing Mephisto as well. His most recent (and by his own testimony, his last) staging of the play was seen earlier this year at the New York City Center in the guest performances of

**GOETHE:** *Faust, Part One of the Tragedy*; Music by Mark Lothar; Paul Hartmann (Faust); Gustav Gründgens (Mephisto); Käthe Gold (Margarete); Elisabeth Flickenschildt (Marthe); Ensemble of the Düsseldorf Playhouse. Recording directed by Peter Gorski. Deutsche Grammophon set 43021/3, six sides, \$20.85.

Our welcome guest reviewer is an Instructor in Speech at the College of Communication Arts, Michigan State University, where he directs campus productions and teaches acting and dramatic literature.

his Hamburg Playhouse. This production was also recently filmed.

The recorded performance is based on an earlier production which Gründgens directed when he was Intendant of the excellent Düsseldorf Playhouse in 1949. Here, as in the succeeding DGG drama recordings, the concentration in the recording is on the spoken word. Sound effects and music are kept to an absolute minimum so that there is nothing to distract the listener from the language of the playwright. This is an approach which is familiar here from the Marlowe Society recordings of Shakespeare, but on the whole the approach seems more appropriate for Goethe than for Shakespeare, both because of the nature of the German play and because of the higher level of competence of the actors in handling the language expressively. In a few scenes, notably the drinking scene in Auerbach's cellar and the duel between Faust and Valentin, austerity has been carried too far, but otherwise the producers have been well-advised in avoiding the footstep and squeaky door sound associated with radio melodrama.

As the limitation to six sides might indicate, the play has been considerably cut for this recording. Most of the cutting has been done in the earlier portions of the play prior to the meeting of Faust and Margarete; after this point, the only major cut is the *Walpurgisnacht*, which is omitted entirely. It should be remembered in this connection that published versions of most German plays, from Goethe and Schiller through Brecht, are designed as reading versions, and it is expected by the author that they will be cut down for stage productions. (The situation is quite different with Shakespeare, whose plays have survived in acting versions.) It is perhaps unfortunate that the *Prolog* in the Theatre and the *Walpurgisnacht* had to be cut entirely—Gründgens included both in his Hamburg production—but the play as recorded certainly holds

together very well as a dramatic entity.

All in all, the performance is a very fine one. Gründgens' Mephisto is a far cry from the stock, sneering, operatic devil—the vital force of the "spirit which always denies" is certainly present here, but there is an emptiness to the view of the world which he represents which is chilling. From a technical standpoint, his performance is a miraculous example of the ability to extract every possible nuance from each word and yet maintain a proper flow of action. Only John Gielgud can approach him today, though their temperaments are a world apart. Equally remarkable is the Margarete of Käthe Gold. Though she is no longer young, she is able to create vocally the illusion of a young girl, not so much through any vocal tricks, but by the completely youthful view of life which is conveyed by the way in which she says things. Here, on records at least, is an ideal solution to the problem of this role which, like Juliet, demands the body of a young girl but the resources of a mature actress. Paul Hartmann as Faust is deeply moving in his opening monologue and handles the scenes with Margarete with great sensitivity and simplicity, but at times he tends a bit too much toward a rather old-fashioned *Pathetik* in delivery, and the mature sound of his voice gives little suggestion of the young Faust. (This last reservation is probably less important than it seems, however. A unified view of Goethe's play can very well support the interpretation that a great deal of the old philosopher remains in the rejuvenated Faust.) Small roles are competently handled, although Flickenschildt's Marthe and Therkatz' Wagner seem to go a bit too far in subduing the comic possibilities of their roles. Goethe was by no means an old sober-sides. The economy of Mark Lothar's music makes the scenes in which it comes to the fore all the more powerful.

The recorded sound is close-up but very clear, and DGG's surfaces are noiseless.

## Baudelaire and Camus

A Guest Review  
By STEPHEN POTTER

**B**EFORE you fill your favorite *houka* with perfumed attar of hashish and settle back to enter the sensual dream world of Charles Baudelaire's garden of evil, be warned. Many of the nettles have been removed. "The Vampire", "Carion", "Assassin's Wine", and "Lesbos" are but a few of the more gamy and

"Les Fleurs du Mal". A reading by Eva Le Gallienne and Louis Jourdan (in French). Caedmon TC-1029, \$5.95.

poisonous works of the Satanic poet's collection that have been excised here. The result is a distinct loss of power. Nevertheless, a generous selection remains that will satisfy any civilized listener who has a surfeit of shock just from being alive in these nineteen-sixties, and there is plenty of strength and surprise left. Plus an ample *mélange* of putrescence and beauty.

I approached the presence of Miss Le Gallienne as co-narrator on this disc

with a stubborn prejudice against hearing Baudelaire read by any but a male voice. The *frissons*, the Poe-like overlay of terror that shrouds so much of his vocabulary would, I feared, be vitiated without virile support. And I found some cause for my concern. While her voice is always majestic and powerful and her readings intelligent, it is Louis Jourdan who is more apt to enter deeply into the spirit of these poems and who rivets the listener's attention. He does a superlative job in capturing the intensity that is here required while Miss Le Gallienne's cooler approach is less suited to wringing the maximum from many a shuddery nuance. My prejudice lingered and I would have preferred Monsieur Jourdan's handling of the entire recital.

Highlights of the record are the introductory "To The Reader", calculated to shock you out of your smug lethargy, the terrible truths of "The Clock", the delicate beauty of "Exotic Perfume", and "Le Léthé" (weakly translatable as "The Deathly") which articulates a tortured lament that modern psychiatry would stifle with a label and a patchwork cure. All of these are read by M. Jourdan. But almost without exception each of the selections has something haunting, provocative and varied to offer. The sicknesses that occupied Baudelaire were the *maladies* of no single *siècle*, and the contemporary listener, given a fair trace of sensibilities, will find himself impassioned and even sympathetic. Baudelaire kept all of his ganglia exposed and in a state of irritation, and they responded, like radar that searches a seemingly empty sky, to reveal the dreams and revulsions that lurk in the healthiest of us.

But just below the crust of his savagery and sadism, of his obsessive dwelling on decay and death, is a rich layer of lyric beauty, and it is this treasure, above all, that rises from these readings to nourish the listener. How is it possible that our own generation of espresso-poets, raging almost exclusively on similar themes, even emulating the Baudelarian method of sense-stimulation through drugs and sex, has failed so utterly to retain anything in their shabby output but the spleen? Well, of course, genius is the amalgam.

In addition to the more pungent omissions already noted, there is another, more regrettable—that of the haunting "Invitation to the Voyage". Did the editors of this record consider it too well-known? Or too atypical? But what a gem it remains of the tormented's yearning for that never-never land of *luxure, calme et volupté*! And what a stunning presentation of it Miss Le Gallienne would surely have offered us!

A brochure containing all of the poems in this album (without the dubious benefit of English translation) is included. It will enhance the listener's enjoyment of the record, and if there are still sophisticates unfamiliar with the complete *Fleurs du Mal* it should encourage their prompt purchase of that volume with its full quota of treachery, perversion, *démence* and virile beauty.

■  
**Camus:** Readings by the Author from "The Stranger", "The Fall", "The Plague", "The Summer" (In French). Caedmon TC-1138. \$5.95.

**S**INCE it may be safely assumed that the listener will be familiar with the reputation, if not the writings, of Albert Camus, hearing the voice of the author will prove, initially, something of a shock. One will have anticipated the sonorities of a virile philosopher (though this was a title Camus declined), the deep-throated reflections of the profound-thinking intellectual. But the voice we hear is higher, thinner, more reedy than we were prepared for. The ear quickly attunes and accepts, however, especially since his readings are delivered with the capabilities of a professional actor, a windfall we had not hoped for.

We hear the opening chapter of "The Fall", the narrative of a French expatriate who talks compulsively while he guzzles gin in an Amsterdam bar. Camus captures perfectly the urbane nervousness of the garrulous narrator and his stinging overlays of scorn and perception. Even one unfamiliar with the book will sense the utter loneliness of the character beneath the brilliant chatter. The glib overture is, in fact, the prelude to an elaborate confession of self-torture that is the very fabric of the story. At the chapter's end, a broader hint of the anguish to come is offered in the narrator's casual remark that he avoids the crossing of bridges—lest he hear a cry for help.

The fragment from one of the last chapters of "The Plague" describes the death of the saint-like Tarrou who succumbs quietly to the scourge at a time, ironically, when the danger is declared past, hope has been restored to the benighted city of Oran and its gates about to be reopened. Symbol of the soldier who falls after the cease-fire. Camus' treatment is as dry and divest of sentiment as the text itself which is low-keyed and clinical, providing more genuine poignancy than any artificially heightened melodrama.

From "The Stranger" we hear the climactic chapter that recounts the absurd murder committed by the taciturn protagonist which is the crux of the powerful novelette. Again the author's reading is



properly cold-blooded and factual while reflecting with great artistry the weariness of the hero driven, in the intense noon heat of the Algerian beach, to the senseless shooting of his Arab victim in a relieving of his temple-pounding tension. Very nearly the crime is the "gratuitous act" so generously explored by the French existentialist writers. The consequences, of course, will lead inexorably to the decapitation by the State of the silent, accepting and unimportant pawn. The book, as you must know, is a veritable gem of life's prevailing over the trapped individual.

Finally from Camus' lesser-known collection of essays, "The Summer", we hear two short excerpts. One is a flavorful recounting of a boxing match in an Oranese Sporting-Club, where not all of the combat and fury is confined within the ring. And a poetical morsel that describes the patient despair of a tormented exile.

The selections from the novels are well chosen. However, one regrets the inclusion of the bits from the essays when that valuable vinyl might have been devoted to yet another portion from one of Camus' more vital plays or novels. Still it would be difficult to find another

spoken recording, poetry excluded, with as many rich nuggets echoing so intensely the pain and truth of being alive.

Camus was dedicated to the individual nobly alone in a godless world, fully aware that he is condemned, conscious of his futile Sisyphus-like role, yet miraculously retaining a large portion of moral rectitude. It was a devotion that assured the meticulous honesty of his portraits and the strength of his fiction. That is not to say that his works do not swarm with their fair share of the corroded—assassins, suicides, cowards, and worse, but the pure light of Camus' analyses so probed the surrounding pressures and the web of extenuating motives of these "victims" that no pure villainy remained. One of the characters who has joined his fellow men to fight the Plague in that *magnum opus* remarks simply, "There is more good in man than there is evil." Hardly an original observation but a rare premise in the conviction of a contemporary French writer.

Hearing this treasury of excerpts will certainly reinforce one's regret at the loss of this humanist at a time well before posterity had reaped the full harvest of his bittersweet fruits. —S.P.

## Readings by Russians

**Chekhov, Dostoyevsky, & Russian Folk Tales.** Russian Readings by Actors of the Moscow Art Theatre and the Maly Theatre. Monitor MR-103, \$4.98.

▲THIS recording is no more interesting than any evening of mediocre material presented by professional but uninspired performers. Its one great asset is its almost total lack of competitors. The same kind of thing in English (or French or German) would scarcely deserve mention in the company of any number of outstanding recordings of literary, dramatic and poetic works currently available.

The choice of odds and ends recorded here was obviously dictated more by tendentious considerations (noble peasants and evil *barons*) than by any exceptional literary or dramatic interest. If the record is intended for the beginning (or intermediate) student the plain text provided should be supplemented by a more elaborate pedagogical apparatus. If it is intended for people who speak Russian the plain text is superfluous. In all events, what we have here is not worth anyone's intensive study, though of course, until something better is available, a student may derive a certain amount of profit from listening to the record—especially if he

has no opportunity to hear and converse with people who speak Russian well.

Let us hope that we may eventually see something better in this series. For example: a recording of the Moscow Art Theater's best actors performing all of one of Chekhov's best plays would be a cultural event worthy of energetic applause and sincere support. Perhaps such a recording already exists and only awaits American release.

●  
**Pasternak Speaks:** "On the poet Alexander Blok" (in Russian); from *An Essay in Autobiography*, "Night" (in Russian); "At the Hospital" (in Russian); "Literature Today" (in German); "To a French Musician" (in French). Discurio L7/001. \$1.75 plus \$0.50 postage (Import) (7").

▲IF, as the record jacket suggests, this is the only recording of Pasternak reading his own work, it will be an attractive item for the collector interested in this genre. For others, I can only say that Pasternak's apparently unrehearsed performance cannot stand comparison with the recordings Mann and Eliot made of their own work and that the technical quality of this recording (made in 1958) does not meet commercial standards. —D. vE.

# THE MONTH'S JAZZ

Martin Williams / Mait Edey / Don Heckman / Robert Levin

**"The Bix Beiderbecke Legend".** RCA Victor LPM-2323, \$3.98.

▲YOU will have to sit through some tiresome Paul Whiteman music (which is not quite old enough yet to be quaint) but Beiderbecke's lovely original variations on—for one—*Lonely Melody*, here included in two different takes, can make it all worth-while. There is also a previously unissued solo from the first session with Jean Goldkette on *I Didn't Know* which sounds exceptionally like the Louis Armstrong of the time. Otherwise I am convinced we hear in Beiderbecke a kind of unique lyric feeling which has affected everyone's playing since. The conventional view is that his life was tragic because he could find no place to play. I expect his real problem was that he could find so few models and guides in jazz tradition for the kind of music he wanted to make, and had to work out so much of it all by himself. Do not miss, by the way, his playing on *Dardanella*, which uses one fragment of that funny piece as a kind of ingeniously interwoven motif in an improvised line, vastly superior to its context. If this is a sign that Victor intends to fulfill its responsibility in jazz reissues, bravo!

—M.W.

**In Person.** The Jimmy Giuffre Quartet. Verve MG V-8387, \$4.98.

▲DURING the past year Jimmy Giuffre has abandoned his cool, pastoral, folksy style on both clarinet and tenor, and, in an effort to achieve greater spontaneity and scope of expression, has turned to Sonny Rollins as a model. The latest recorded results can be heard on this LP, with Jim Hall on guitar, Buell Neidlinger on bass, and Billy Osborne on drums. Neidlinger and Osborne are young *avant-garde* players who have listened to Ornette Coleman's rhythm section. Hall is becoming one of the masters of modern jazz guitar, with a clear silver sound free of electronic overtones, and a blues-inflected style on which Django Reinhardt, Charlie Christian, and perhaps Billy Bauer have left their marks.

Giuffre plays tenor on three medium or up tempo tunes composed by himself, Hall, and Thelonius Monk. As compositions these three are marvelous. He plays clarinet on three ballads, one of which, *The*

*Quiet Time*, dates from his own quiet past but is not treated that way; the other two, *What's New* and *My Funny Valentine*, are standards (I list them in order of regrettably increasing standardness). Giuffre's tenor solos all begin with a striking motif, developed or altered for a chorus or more, but then gradually disintegrate into aimless fragments, shreds of Rollins sound without continuity or memorable shape, in which there is plenty of emoting but not much music. He also makes the dreadful mistake of trying to accompany Hall's frequently gorgeous choruses, playing irrelevant and muddy figures beneath the guitar lines. Nevertheless, Hall's are the best choruses on the record.

On clarinet Giuffre is neither as exciting nor as annoying as on tenor. The old Giuffre almost reappears on the tender *What's New*, but on the other two ballads his new hard tone just makes him sound chilly. After all, the clarinet is less well suited to his new intentions. —M.E.

●  
**Charlie Parker: An Evening At Home With the Bird.** Savoy MG-12152, \$4.98.

▲THE liner notes say that this album was put together from home recordings made at a party in Charlie Parker's apartment sometime during the mid-fifties. If so (it sounds more like a noisy club date to me), Parker lived in a big apartment and threw big parties; at times we hear more of the guests (if such they were) on this record than the rhythm section. Nonetheless, Parker himself is quite clearly recorded, playing right into the mike. Wherever the session was, it must have caught him at a good moment during one of those declining years. He was in excellent technical shape, and has brilliant moments on *Fine and Dandy*, *Hot House*, and *There's a Small Hotel*. On *These Foolish Things* he plays some quotes (including one from Grieg) and repeats them rather pointlessly on subsequent choruses.

There are two other soloists: an interesting but variable guitarist in an advanced Charlie Christian style, whom I don't recognize, and a fine tenor saxophonist the liner suggests is Wardell Gray,

but who sounds to me just like Dexter Gordon. The rhythm section is barely audible; sometimes the bass is totally unheard for bars at a time.

Virtually any Parker record is worthwhile. The amateur recording job on this one doesn't begin to compare as an obstacle for the listener with some of the strings, choral groups, and Afro-Cuban accompaniment Parker recorded with in studios during these same last years. —M.E.

•  
**The Jazz Poll Winners.** Columbia CL-1610, \$3.98.

▲THIS is a grab-bag of performances by musicians who happen to be both recording for Columbia and successful in the readers' polls conducted by *Metronome*, *Down Beat*, and *Playboy* magazines. As such, it is a reasonably accurate index of current popular taste in jazz, which is, of course, sometimes good, sometimes bad. The LP also serves as a Columbia jazz sampler in the sense that all the tracks are lifted from Columbia albums now available.

Two tracks are important and beautiful: Charlie Mingus' *Better Git It In Your Soul* and Duke Ellington's *Upper Manhattan Medical Group*, with Dizzy Gillespie as featured soloist. Four—by Miles Davis (with Bill Evans, Cannonball Adderley, and John Coltrane), J. J. Johnson, Gerry Mulligan (with Art Farmer), and Dave Brubeck (with Paul Desmond)—are somewhat less good, but contain many moments of high quality. Three—by Les Brown, Art Van Damme, and Don Elliott (with Kenny Burrell)—are more or less pleasant trivia. One, by the Hi-Lo's, a non-jazz male vocal quartet, is an ugly slick pop job. —M.E.

■  
**Sarah Vaughan:** "The Divine One". Roulette R-52060, \$4.98.

▲OF course Sarah Vaughan leads a double life on records, but often her stuff intended for the pop market is more interesting than her jazz stuff. There is, for one, that towering set of "Great Songs From Hit Shows" that appeared on Mercury a few years ago. This set however is intended as jazz and is largely a delight. I can especially recommend the intriguing, toying, improvising on *It Ain't No Use*. I am well aware that many people will say that Miss Vaughan's variations have no reason for being, but it seems to me they have the best reason of all, which is usually Miss Vaughan's cohesive humor and musicianship. —M.W.

•  
**Toshiko Mariano, Charlie Mariano:** *The Toshiko Mariano Quartet*. Candid 8012, \$4.98.

▲SUCCESSFUL partnerships in the performing arts are rare—especially those

between husband and wife. In jazz they are almost non-existent except for a number of singer-musician teams.

The uniqueness of the Toshiko-Mariano combination derives primarily from the fact that their musical relationship is one of absolute professionalism. Neither leans on the other for support; they are both individual talents of the highest order. Their music has deepened and matured since the time they were solo performers. Our ears are so frequently assailed by groups whose principal acquaintance with each other comes after they enter the recording studio that it is almost startling to realize just exactly what such words as empathy, rapport and understanding can really mean. Toshiko and Mariano, in fact, epitomize these words, and they do it in the loveliest manner imaginable.

One would be exceeding the rights of the reviewer, perhaps, to conjecture too deeply about the change in Mariano's playing since his marriage to Toshiko, but the improvement is there for all to hear. Always a good professional, Mariano never before seemed able to attain those moments of liberated joy that are the hallmark of the inspired improviser. On this recording he does, especially in his brilliant chorus on an original composition, *Little T*. Toshiko's role is more one of accompaniment; her solo style still feels unsettled, yet at moments shows bursts of sparkling originality (*When You Meet Her*; *Little T*).

A less obvious but just as important aspect of the Quartet is the judicious use of such relatively unusual techniques as modal and scalar improvisation, contrasting metric sections and even bitonality. Yet none of this sounds artificial or contrived. Toshiko and Mariano have the wisdom and good taste to make their experimentation subordinate to the musical idea. In an environment that is often clouded by the calculated use of *avant-garde* methods for their own sake, the intelligent and swinging jazz of the Toshiko-Mariano Quartet is refreshing. —D.H.

•  
**George Shearing:** "On the Sunny Side of the Strip". Capitol T-1416, \$3.98.

▲SOMEHOW I always have the feeling that with Shearing jazz is a style and a manner, a musical entertainment—and not much else. This one was recorded in Las Vegas (naturally) and again shows Shearing's taste for picking some of the best jazz "lines" around: *Confirmation*, *Joy Spring*, *Jordu*. Shearing has trouble swinging and is therefore wise to surround himself with players who are infectious rhythmically. Shearing is also obviously a good pianist and can, if he wishes, improvise a line. The trouble for me is that his lines are always rather derivative (of Bud Powell, more or less) and dull. —M.W.

# Unlikely Corners

**WHY NOT LOOK** below the surface occasionally and find out what it is in the direct appeal of the popular tune which makes the audience go home whistling; to see if there is not some artistic impulse hidden in unlikely corners. . .

—Ralph Vaughan Williams

SOME MONTHS back I did an Angry Young Column decrying the state of the record business, which was—and is—aesthetically low. Nothing changes, I guess, and my influence on the Culture of Our Time amounts to little. No one even got mad and threatened to pull out advertising.

Possibly the theme of this month's disquisition may take its cue from **Through Sick and Sin** (Epic LN-3776), an album of more or less funny ditties about human (or inhuman) weaknesses, problems and neuroses as exemplified by what is generically (but imprecisely) referred to as "Madison Avenue", the stock market, the chic folk singer, and so forth. Miss Fay DeWitt (I suspect an awful pun here) dispenses this wit (and, at times, semi-wit) with charm and a rapier thrust of obvious satire. The album is the kind of thing you may want to play at parties (particularly Mark Bucci's "The All-Americans"). People will laugh, perhaps nervously. Most of the songs are in the "special material" category; they lean heavily on the lyric and lightly on melody. Some are, however, quite attractive—the ballady numbers—and there is a special version of *Put On a Happy Face* from "Bye Bye Birdie". Miss DeWitt has an attractive voice, I might add.

Similar in its way is **Candid Telefun** (United Artists 4075) in which a young man named Harold Flender gets himself engaged in some pretty wild phone conversations. Mr. Flender wields one of the most innocent voices I've ever heard; he sounds shy, ingenuous, harmless, and artless. The very sincerity of his voice disarms the person on the other end of the phone (I'm presuming that these are authentic transcriptions as the album purports them to be). But the major point of this release is that no matter how bizarre a request is made, human greed is there to fill it. A pet shop clerk is willing to sell him

monkeys for cooking, a book shop is happy to supply him with books (the Bible, no less) to sit upon, an exterminator is willing to kill off some fleas and promises not to kill Flender's fleas mixed in with them: no job is too small. Well, a bank *does* refuse to lend him two dollars. This is an interesting social document as well as a pretty amusing party record.

I rather liked, with few reservations, Johnny Burke's score—he did both words and music—for **Donnybrook!** (Kapp 8500). A lyricist mostly, Burke wrote many a fine movie song, generally with Jimmy Van Heusen and for Bing Crosby. He also enjoyed a rich collaboration with the late Arthur Johnston. Burke's score is a melodious one, though on first playing I cannot say that I feel it is a very distinguished one. Maybe it will grow on me. Certainly I intend to hear it a few more times for the singing of one of my favorite vocalists, Susan Johnson. I like also the singing of Joan Fagen, which is rich and clear.

What a difference when we arrive at **Frances Faye in Frenzy** (Verve 2147). If you belong to the Faye few (but there really must be many), this is your dish of whatever it is. Miss Faye's delivery, a kind of *Sprechstimme*, lends a certain sameness to every song. She works hard and no doubt pleases her following—and, in the clubs at least, her act is replete with innuendo for the initiated. But I am not one of them. Miss Faye delivers some very good songs (she always has), among which this time around are *Heat Wave*, *Frenesi* and *Out of This World*.

By way of a sudden switch, how about **The Lincoln Hymns** (Capitol © 1562)? Not too long ago a researcher discovered a hymnal which once belonged to Lincoln, "The Believer's Daily Treasure". This caused a small flurry among the Lincoln scholars and caused some wheels to grind at Capitol Records. The result of the

latter is the present album sung by old cowboy star Tex Ritter, accompanied by a choir and orchestra conducted by Ralph Carmichael. As a part-time Lincoln man myself, I can see some merit in this idea except for a major flaw: the hymnal contained only the hymns. These big, big, BIG arrangements were supplied by latter-day tunesmiths. Technically, then, this isn't really a collection of the hymns that Lincoln knew and, while there is no attempt to be sneaky about it, there is a touch of the artificial about all this. Ritter, I must say, sings simply and with dignity.

To revert to the theme of the opening paragraph, there are **Pink Shoelaces** (Dot 3371) sung by Dodie Stevens and **Neil Sedaka Sings Little Devil** (Victor LPM-2421). These two gave me my most trying moments. Miss Stevens alienated me from the beginning with the title song of her album, then won me over with a beautifully sensitive rendition of *Yes, I'm Lonesome Tonight*—only to spoil it all with a mawkish recitation in the middle of the song.

Young Mr. Sedaka is a rock and roll specialist from Brooklyn; his tone and diction is from the hills—where he usually sends me, if he sends me at all. In the album's title song, an original composition(?) by Mr. Sedaka, he declares in a whining tone that "I'm gonna make an angel outta yew!" Well, Brooklyn also gave us Walt Whitman, George Gershwin and Aaron Copland.

In his latest album Elvis Presley, according to the gospel of RCA Victor, has **Something for Everybody** (LPM-2370); mebbe so, mebbe so. We get Mr. Presley's usual dictionless delivery in the ballads, but I must admit the one item for me is *Give Me the Right*, which is built over a most interesting rhythmic figure. But I suppose that could be chalked up to the arranger as much as the vocalist.

The best voice of the lot is that of Gene McDaniels, who may be heard in **100 Pounds of Clay!** (Liberty 3191); the song of that title is a calypso-ish excursion into popular religion that has stirred up some controversy. Mr. Daniels disturbs me when he takes a song like *Till There Was You* and freaks up the melody. Unless we are to go through the next decade (E=mc<sup>2</sup> permitting) without the total destruction of our popular music traditions, our younger singers, especially those with fine voices such as Gene McDaniels', will have to return to style and reject mannerism.

Rather than buy any album mentioned in this column, why not go out and get a recording of, say, *The Art of Fugue* or *Musical Offering*? Bach will restore your faith in man, music, and the record industry.

—E.J.

## This is a laughing matter

In the last few years, young bright new comedians have burgeoned on records—Shelley Berman, Lennie Bruce, Bob Newhart, Mort Sahl, Tom Lehrer, to name some. Their fresh, new brand of humor—sophisticated and often "sick"—is fast replacing parlor games as a source of entertainment for social evenings at home. What's new in this field on records? Simple—just refer to the *latest* monthly issue of the "Schwann Long Playing Catalog." If you haven't got the latest issue, better hurry to your record dealer's and get it—if you want to have the last laugh.

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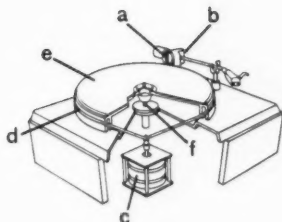
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